



# THE MCGILL DAILY

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# \$160,000 Commitment Entwines McGill In Federal Controversy

*University says the money was well-deserved and that it's ready for an audit*

BY JON BRICKER

McGill found itself at the centre of a bitter war being fought in Ottawa over program grants this week.

Two Human Resources Development Canada commitments, including one for up to \$160,000, were among those set for audit Monday in a scandal that has federal opposition fingering the Liberals for mismanaging \$1-billion in program funding.

The \$160,000 HRDC Contribution Agreement for a McGill-led program to facilitate student exchanges between Canadian and European universities came under public fire when it was revealed that McGill had asked for only \$60,000 for the program.

But according to Vice-Principal Research Ian Butler, the head of the McGill project, this was not a case of mismanagement of HRDC dollars. He says he's not worried about the McGill program being named on the audit list of funding recipients.

"I see no reason why we were even named," said Butler of national newspaper headlines and comments in the House questioning \$160,000 commitment.

He says that he applied for the \$60,000 grant in 1996, but that HRDC officials were so excited about the plan that they suggested he expand it. Butler also says that what this week's media attention failed to make clear was that the \$160,000 figure represents not a grant, but a ceiling placed on all HRDC Contribution Agreement programs - the maximum cost the program could have incurred. He said that the program has received about \$100,000 to date and comes with the expectation that if any of that money goes unused, it will be returned.

"We've probably only spent \$70,000," agreed University Relations Director Kate Williams.

"We never actually got \$160,000 and probably never will."

She also agreed with Butler that criticism of the funding has been undeserved.

"It's really a shame that there's been all this scrutiny for something that is very appropriate and a great project."

She also says she's confident that today's audit will clear matters up. "Everything is hunky dory," said Williams. "We've got all the records and everything's fine."

Butler also noted that he received a call from HRDC officials yesterday letting him know that they had found the documentation of the decision to increase the program budget. The documentation was originally reported to have gone missing and fed opposition claims that the federal department had ciphened away \$100,000.

But Diane Ablonczy, a Reform MP who has led the charge against the Liberals says she doesn't doubt that McGill's handled the money well, but she does worry about the department's handling of the funding proposal.

"This is not an issue of whether McGill handled the money well," Ablonczy said.

"But how could a department inflate the distribution of a grant with no criteria, no justification of what the extra money was going to buy?"

"This is a program that's supposed to benefit students. Someone should be making sure that really happens. Someone has to be watchdogging this."

The exchange program which began in Canada in 1997, has seen 20 Canadian science students from eight universities sent to schools in Europe, where the exchange program was first developed. The \$70,000 spent to date went to cover participants' travel and \$1500 each in living expenses, a small price to pay, according to Butler, considering the valuable experience participants receive and the challenge science students often face in transferring credits.

A second \$30,500 HRDC grant to fund a program promoting multimedia distance education for Inuit teachers was the source of more controversy at McGill this week. But Williams says an audit earlier this week revealed that all the money was

where it should be.

The long war of words over program funding began last month when an HRDC audit raised questions about the handling of the 459 projects the department funded since 1997. Monday's announcement included the release of details on several of the projects which critics say were mismanaged to the tune of \$1 billion. This week, opposition leaders also called for the resignation of Human Resources Minister Jane Stewart and accused the Liberals of endorsing programs in ridings that they hoped would vote in Liberal MPs.

"The audit showed that the HRDC does not have a grip on the doling out of its money," Ablonczy said.

She added that the fallout will likely include tighter restraints being put on federal funding programs. "This is an issue of proper and prudent control of taxpayers' money... There will probably be a lot more rules put on these programs now and that's a good thing."

LEONARDO DICAPRIO

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Students confronted Sam Gross, Melissa Pullett, Andrew Tischler and Kevin McPhee with a slew of CBA questions

## CBA Ire Dominates SSMU Meeting

*Concerned students bombard execs with cola deal questions*

BY BEN ERRETT

The Students' Society held their second Open Meeting of the year yesterday, and students with concerns about the Cold Beverage Agreement were out in full force.

Although each of the executives spoke briefly about the many facets of their individual portfolios, the vast majority of the questions raised dealt with McGill's pending deal with Coca-Cola Bottling Ltd., which would give the beverage giant exclusive vending and marketing rights across campus.

The first question asked as the open forum began addressed the issue of ethical guidelines in dealings with corporations.

"Where exactly do we draw the line in terms of the ethical behaviour of the companies we do business with?" asked UO Science student Samira Rahmani.

"I understand that many people have concerns about the CBA," replied SSMU President Andrew Tischler. "FERC [Financial Ethics Research Committee]

looked at the company last year, as did the university."

Tischler also said that it was "hard to quantify" ethical guidelines, but that there were certain limits.

Vice-President Operations Kevin McPhee also replied to the question, noting that the deal had many benefits for students, "not just the money."

Rahmani followed up her question by asking what exactly the non-financial benefits were. McPhee responded by saying that free products from clubs would be another benefit. When Rahmani asked if that wasn't just another financial benefit, McPhee faltered.

"The major incentive is money," Tischler interrupted.

In response to a question about Coke's dealings in foreign countries, Tischler explained that different countries have different wages, and attempts to normalize wages globally has led to job losses.

VP Communications Matt Wyndowe, the organizer of the meeting, claimed that

the SSMU wasn't pro or con on the CBA, and was trying to stay neutral.

"There have been many concerns addressed over months and months....We would not go through with a deal if it was ethically compromising," Wyndowe said.

"If SSMU isn't pro or con, will SSMU drop the CBA after a No vote?" asked SUS VP Finance Arif Chowdhury.

"Certainly SSMU won't sign," McPhee said. "If we voted against it, Coke wouldn't sign."

Law Students Association representative Francois Tanguay-Renaud then accused SSMU of trying to avoid a referendum on the deal.

"LSA has reached the conclusion that SSMU never wanted a referendum," Tanguay-Renaud said. Tanguay-Renaud also said that the LSA wanted to see the terms of the deal, but the university would not release them.

"There's no sense going to the students for input if we have no sense of what we're getting input on," McPhee said.

## Who Are the Students For a Better McGill?

BY CHRISTOPHER NEEDLES

Most of the McGill community hasn't even heard of SFBM, but that hasn't stopped the newly formed student group from stirring up controversy on nearly every issue they raise.

The members of Students for a Better McGill aim to focus attention on the problems they believe are most pressing to McGill's future. However, they are drawing criticism for what some say is false and misconstrued information.

Yet SFBM says it is merely trying to take the first steps in what it hopes will be a continued discussion.

"We want the community to become aware of our ideas," says SFBM co-founder and spokesperson Jesse Rickard. "We don't want to stand idly by while watching parts of our university deteriorate."

The group has a fundamental objection to the Quebec government's involvement with McGill. Rickard states that "an educational institution should be devoid of politics - each student should be given the same opportunity." He elaborates on the group's idea of meritocracy, "where achievement is rewarded, not your origins."

Much of the controversy surrounding SFBM policy stems from the group's stance against differential tuition.

"What kind of treatment of students is that?" asks Rickard. "It basically says that if you are from La Francophonie [a group

of French-speaking nations] we will give you preferential treatment."

SFBM further claims that McGill observes admissions quotas imposed by the Quebec government and favouring francophone students. But McGill administration states these quotas are simply not present. Luc Vinet, vice-president (academic) agrees with SFBM's desire for a meritocracy, but says that it already exists.

"There are no francophone quotas," Vinet insists. "Admission to McGill is presently on the basis of merit."

Vinet feels the confusion may stem from the informal quotas proposed by Principal Shapiro as an "ideal for the health of the community." The informal quota stands at a potential 50 per cent Quebec students and 20 per cent francophone. Otherwise, Vinet says, "I think it is bad information...that should not be spread."

The group's proposal for privatization is also coming under fire. While SFBM says it neither supports nor opposes the proposed McGill College International, its own models for privatization are equally debatable.

The group thinks there is a misperception about McGill as a private institution. "People think...corporations will force us to do things," Rickard states. He says that government can be equally forceful.

SFBM proposes funding from a variety of sources, including rich alumni, institutions, corporations, and perhaps even the government. But Vice-Principal Vinet sees

this as simply unfeasible.

"In an ideal world we would be private, have a large endowment, students would study for free, we would pick the best....But it is just out of reach."

He goes on to call the SFBM proposal "noble, but just a dream."

Shaun Lovejoy, a professor in the McGill physics department, feels likewise. He calls SFBM's policies "confused."


"It has been argued that there has been a historical injustice toward McGill," Lovejoy says. "But McGill isn't doing all that badly. The Quebec government is killing all the universities."

Lovejoy felt that the SFBM ideas about privatization were particularly confused, especially since in his eyes McGill could not be much more private than it is now.


"The Board of Governors is a self-perpetuating closed body with a rather large share of corporate members....It is quite incredible that so much money is given to a private body." In Lovejoy's opinion, the Quebec government is showing very little discrimination toward the university and its anglophones.

But the SFBM defends its position, maintaining that there are inequalities on campus that should be addressed. They also make it clear that their argument is not just for anglophone students.

"This is not about anglophones versus francophones...McGill is a multicultural university and I hope we recognize that."



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# Mix of Optimism and Pessimism at Inaugural Arts Career Fair

BY J. KELLY NESTRUCK

Hundreds of arts students poured into the Shatner Ballroom on Tuesday looking to find work and to network at the first McGill Arts 2000 Career Fair, organized by AUS and Career and Placement Services.

From Gap Canada to CSIS, 35 diverse organizations set up a table hoping to lure McGill's finest to seek employment in their companies or agencies.

Jeremy Farrell, Arts Undergraduate Society vice-president external and one of the coordinators, explained the need for an arts career fair. Arts students "were always just included in a general career fair," he said.

"My focus was jobs for arts students. Every company here is here looking specifically for people who are going to complete or have arts degrees."

The mood, however, amongst the future graduates at the fair was pessimistic. Jessica Smith, a U3 arts student, is concerned about her job prospects.

"I'm getting a degree in sociology and unless I do another degree in something else after that there are really very few options for me." Smith is worried that the only work she will be able to find will be in the business world outside her chosen field. "It'll be difficult without wanting to go into that realm to find something."

Likewise, Kellie Knight, a U2 History-Drama major, is unsure of how to find employment upon graduation. "It's very overwhelming," she said. "You finish

school and then you're out in the world and you have no idea what to do then in the way of getting the career that you've been studying for, because no one is there to tell you how to get it."

Knight did not find the fair very helpful. "I was actually a bit disappointed....My flatmate was expecting The Gazette and The Globe [and Mail] to be here. I was expecting more theatre performing arts groups."

Even organizer Farrell was not particularly optimistic on the prospects for bachelor of arts graduates. "There's a lot of jobs," he said. "There's also a lot of arts students. It doesn't balance off."

There was a fair amount of optimism to counter these views during the panel discussion entitled "How to Find a Career in Communications." The panel comprised seven participants, including CHOM FM's Program Director Ian MacLean, Global TV's Andrew Peplowski, freelance journalists Stephanie Whittaker and Helena Katz, author and former media advisor Michelle Tisseyre, Cultural Human Resources Council representative Leah Geller, and student entrepreneur Manish Srivastava. CAPS Director Gregg Blachford led the discussion.

All the members of the panel were quite optimistic about the opportunities for bachelor of arts degree-holders, particularly in the area of communications. Geller, who works at the CHRC, which helps people find employment in the cultural sector, believes there are more opportunities out there than ever before.

"The cultural sector is the fastest growing sector right now," she told the assembled crowd. According to Geller, there is a sort of mythology surrounding the cultural sector that groups like CHRC are trying hard to dispel. "There are a lot of people working in the sector," she said, "but 50 per cent are self-employed."

Katz agreed. "There's a false perception that you have to hook up with an existing job," she said. "I created my own. You can create your own."

All the panel members pointed to the huge increase in jobs for arts graduates in the computer industry as a harbinger of better times for arts students.

"New media is growing at an exponential rate," Srivastava said. Srivastava used to be a science student, but after creating the popular site [www.book4exchange.com](http://www.book4exchange.com), he switched into arts and is considering a future on the world wide web.

One thing all the panelists had in common is that they have all held many different positions throughout their careers — and they all started at the bottom rung. Peplowski started off as a radio reporter



Students shop for jobs at Arts Career Fair in Shatner Ballroom on Tuesday.

working 50 hours a week for \$30. Whittaker graduated from McGill in 1975 and worked for two years at the Holiday Inn before embarking on her journalism career. Tisseyre did not even begin her career until she was 40 years old.

MacLean also stressed that it is important not to worry excessively at age 22 about settling down into a career right away. "Some of the most interesting 40-year-olds I know don't know what they want to do with their life," he told the crowd. He suggested many tips for getting into the communications business. It is important to persevere, he said and to "stay on the radar" of prospective employers.

"Don't just drop off your resume at reception. Call and make sure that they got it." He also echoed the others' points on the importance of networking.

MacLean's message of persistence and networking got across well. He was ambushed at the end of the meeting by students eager to get his business card, and ran out of the cards very quickly.

Organizers were very happy with the turnout at the career fair and hope to expand it next year. Students, however, remain to be convinced that there are opportunities out there once they receive their diploma.



## LE DEVOIR CALLS SSMU'S HANDBOOK SEXIST

The SSMU Handbook, distributed to students at the beginning of the school year, was the target of criticism in a front page article of a major Montreal daily newspaper on Tuesday.

"The Students' Society of McGill University published last autumn a student agenda filled with sexist comments and gives a cynical view of Quebec politics," Le Devoir reported.

The article quoted a fictitious account of an American praising the Peel Pub that is printed on page 123 of the handbook. The young American likes the Peel Pub for its cheap drinks and easy women.

"Peel Pub is the greatest fucking bar I've ever been to," the author writes. "And then [my brother] told me all about the hot-ass French broads who love zee zee Américain (sic) boys and pick you up and take you back to their apartments and, you

know, do you."

The French newspaper also quoted an excerpt from the section that explained Quebec politics.

"Here we have provincial premiers exhorting French-speaking women to have white babies and language police confiscating illegally packaged matzoh balls," the author writes.

Le Débat Français, The Daily's sister paper, ran a similar story last September, calling attention to the handbook's political slant.

"It's too bad that it came out like that. If I would have known, I would have taken it out," said SSMU President Andrew Tischler last September.

-Jason Chow

## TISCHLER CALLS DAILY "PARASITIC"

SSMU President Andrew Tischler lashed out at The Daily at yesterday's SSMU Open Meeting.

In response to a question asking him to explain his "interference with The Daily" over the John Cleghorn Senate leak, Tischler explained that his visit to The Daily's offices prior to the publication of the story was in no way a threat, but rather to explain to the editors the severity of the situation.

"We wanted to make sure that they understood the situation," Tischler said.

"The writers were not aware of the negative consequences of their story."

Tischler added that The Daily did not understand how the story would affect the community or the implications for students.

"Because of that story and the breach of trust, it has made it harder for us" to get the terms of the Cold Beverage Agreement, Tischler said. Questions about the exact terms of the secret contract had been raised at the meeting.

In addition, Tischler said that The Daily has "no accountability to students" and accused the paper of "parasitism and opportunism."

VP University Affairs Xavier Van Chau, who accompanied Tischler in his visit to The Daily, said that it was his job to do so.

"It was my responsibility as VP University Affairs," Van Chau said.

-Ben Errell

## FYCC REFERENDUM WITHOUT QUORUM

Earlier this week, SSMU Chief Returning Officer Paul Flicker announced that there was not quorum in last November's referendum, which asked students whether or not they supported giving a vote to first-year student councilors.

Flicker did not release the results of the referendum immediately afterward

because he had declared that the SSMU Constitution, approved by students in November of 1998, was invalid. He said it had never actually come into effect because of a series of errors. SSMU President Andrew Tischler initially denied the allegations, but later, in an agreement signed with Flicker, conceded that the Students' Society had been guilty of negligence in its failure to address the constitutional errors.

In the agreement, Flicker also conceded that it was improper of him to withhold the results of the vote.

The SSMU has submitted a request to run the same referendum again during the upcoming elections, in hopes of receiving quorum this time around.

-Jaime Kirzner-Roberts

## CBA VOTE DEADLINE EXTENDED

At the last minute, the SSMU Chief Returning Officer extended the deadline for referendum question submissions, giving Students' Society executives and the student group organizing against the Cold Beverage Agreement several more days to negotiate a referendum question suitable to both parties.

SSMU executives and the students had been in negotiations since late last week, trying to reach an agreement over the

exact wording of the referendum question and preamble in time for the initial deadline, which was Monday. Both sides say that the question and preamble put forth by the other side would present a biased picture of the issue to students, and their negotiations have aimed to integrate the two preambles.

But even with the submission deadline extended until Thursday, it appears that the two groups have been unable to reach a compromise. The students have already submitted their question, which has been accepted by the CRO, and it is unclear whether or not the SSMU will be able to submit another question on the same issue if a deal is not reached in time. Both parties say that they hope to reach a compromise.

If the CBA is approved in referendum, Coke will have a monopoly on cold beverage sales on campus for an 11-year period. In return, Coke will pay McGill an estimated \$10-million, 40 per cent of which would go to student associations. The negotiations regarding the agreement have been highly controversial. Students opposed to the deal say that a corporate presence on campus threatens university autonomy, while those in favour of the agreement emphasize the necessity of the funds to the university.

-JKR



# Congress Rallies for a Stronger African Studies Program

*Africana 2000 calls on McGill to increase funding, provide support*

BY RICKY C. GORDON AND CHANTELE JONES

The African Studies Program at McGill needs to be expanded. That was the message at last weekend's Africana Congress 2000, which was held here at McGill.

"For progress to happen, students and faculty must come together," said Dr. Ismail Rashid, the keynote speaker who kicked off the event last Friday. Rashid, a former McGill student and current advisor to the Africana Studies Committee, asserted that McGill University must reaffirm its position on African Studies. He argued that Canada and Africa are economically important to each other and students should be fully prepared to receive as much knowledge about the continent in Arts, Anthropology and other fields of study.

Speaker Reverend Darryl Gray, Pastor of Union Baptist Church and former Kansas State Senator, agreed. "McGill University has an obligation and not an option" to expand the African Studies program, he argued. He went on to say that the program raises awareness about both Africa's past and the reality of racism in Canada.

"We need to demystify the insulting degradations (about Africa) and realize the marvelous contributions that are too often ignored," Gray said.

Gray discussed the problem of finding funding to support an African studies program. "The responsibility for funding lies ultimately within McGill the institution," he said, although he was supportive of pri-

vate fundraising campaigns suggested by students.

"If the students are willing to go out and find funding from external sources, McGill should be accountable for at least matching those funds," he said.

Dave Austin, an organizer of Youth In Motion, a former member of the African Studies Committee, also spoke at the Congress. Austin spoke about the importance of connecting academic approaches to African studies with outreach into the Black community. "Most of what happens at McGill University is not relevant to the wider community," he said. "We need to work on this and ensure awareness in broader society."

According to Austin, Black Montrealers "have a unique, particular experience in

encountering, diverse people of African descent". Whether they're directly from Africa, from the Caribbean, or they're Canadians, these groups all derive from the diaspora and have a lot to learn from each other, he said. Most participants in the workshops agreed that the differences that exist within the Diaspora should not divide but instead strengthen the Black community. The program should therefore take a comprehensive approach and unite factions rather than isolate them, participants agreed.

The Congress was organized by the African Studies Committee, a group of students interested in improving McGill's African Studies program. The Congress offered a number of workshops and panel discussions, and on Sunday, participants

hammered out a set of demands to be forwarded to the McGill administration.

Other speakers who spoke out in support of an improved African Studies program were Dr. Nigel Thomas, Professor of American Literature at the Université Laval; Dr. George Dei, Associate Chair the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; Myron Echenberg, professor of African history and currently Convenor of the African Studies Program at McGill and French community activist Jean-Claude Icart.

Other panelists included Dean of Arts Carman Miller and Dalhousie Chair of Black Canadian Studies Esmerelda Thornhill.



*A scene from the Africana Congress 2000*

## The Future of Africana Studies

Workshops made up of 10 to 15 people at last weekend's conference added their input to the program's Development Plan. Suggestions made in the sessions included:

- \* More political pressure to be mobilized within the program and applied to the powers that be.

- \* More representation in the high positions at McGill.

- \* An expansion of the support network; bringing together of the communities leaders. A mutual communication must exist between the students and the wider community; African Studies should not be isolated to university students

- \* Outreach into elementary, high school and CEGEP level students.

- \* Stimulate interest in African Studies; increase enrollment numbers in the Major and Minor program at McGill.

- \* African content courses need to be extended into areas other than History and Anthropology; African oriented Political Science, Art, Religion, Linguistics, Law, Race Relations would enrich the program.

- \* Determine the role of the Chair of the African Studies Program and to ensure his / her awareness of the diasporic complexities.

- \* Members of the program must also make efforts to solicit funding from philanthropic resources.

# Rethinking Freedom, Privilege in Today's University

*Professor champions affirmative action in creating more open, inclusive institutions*

BY MICHELLE DEAN

Academia has to open itself to disadvantaged groups through affirmative action, argued Professor Esmerelda Thornhill of Dalhousie University at a round-table discussion on Monday.

The professor spoke at a discussion titled "The Double Challenge of Dismantling Privilege and Opening Up the Academy."

A crowd of students filled the Arts Council room, some sitting on the floor to hear Thornhill's ideas on how to create academic institutions in which disadvantaged groups would feel more welcome. The talk was sponsored jointly by the Program in Canadian Ethnic Studies and the Black Students' Network.

Professor Thornhill has been at the forefront of the drive to open Canadian



*Dr. Esmerelda Thornhill*

institutions to the concerns of disadvantaged groups. She holds the James Robinson Johnston Chair of Black Canadian Studies at Dalhousie, where she teaches in the faculty of Law. The Chair was named for the first black Nova Scotian to graduate from university, and

it is the only one of its kind in Canada. Professor Thornhill hails the chair's creation as an "unprecedented national initiative."

The discussion began with an hour-long talk by Professor Thornhill on the challenges and benefits of initiating different perspectives into the academy. With numerous visual aids that ranged from graphs to mathematical equations, she highlighted the academy's key role in creating and maintaining racial social structures.

"If you have only racial prejudice, and the person does not have the power or the authority to translate it into action, it's just prejudice," Professor Thornhill explained. She argued that the academy is a key source of the institutional power that could both create and destroy racism.

Professor Thornhill especially advocated the use of affirmative action to allow the admission of students from disadvantaged

groups. Arguing that offering positions to people of different races does not create any kind of "special privilege," Professor Thornhill pointed out that the situation is similar to staggering starting places on an oval racetrack.

"We stagger them taking into consideration the inherent weakness of the track," Professor Thornhill noted. Thus, every runner in the metaphorical race is given the same distance to run; they only start and end at different points on the track.

Naturally, Professor Thornhill's ideas were not received without some controversy. One audience member asked if the problem with affirmative action was not that the privileged groups often feel "bumped out of the race (for admission to academic institutions) altogether."

"All it means..." replied Professor Thornhill, "is that the sure entitlement of (a member of a privileged group) to get in is no longer there... that the historical dis-

advantage is calibrated."

Others raised the concern that her ideas did not address the inertia of curriculum in Western universities, as the focus of our studies is still on the history, art and ideas of the privileged groups. Professor Thornhill argued that introducing more students from other groups in society would necessarily move towards curriculum change since those students would want to study subjects that mirrored their own backgrounds.

Professor Thornhill reiterated the call for a dialogue among members of all groups, both the disadvantaged and the advantaged in closing her discussion.

"Very often, white people will cop out, by saying 'Oh, I'm a white person, I can't talk about race.' I say oh, yes you can. But talk from your own location. Don't appropriate my trajectory, my experience and try to talk with my voice," she said.



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letters



OUT-OF-PROVINCE STUDENTS  
SHOULD BE WELCOMED

This is concerning Louis-Phillippe Messier's letter on February 7 ("McGill Not Lowering Standards.") Mr. Messier seems to suggest that out-of-province students are profiting from the Quebec government's funding of McGill at the expense of Quebec students: "Let us remember that McGill is a public university that receives 80 per cent of its funds from the Quebec government. So is it not normal that 50 per cent of its student population be from Quebec?"

Mr. Messier should realize that the higher fees out-of-province and international students pay go straight to the provincial government, which then redistributes this money to all Quebec universities. In light of this McGill should be proud of all the non-Quebec students it attracts since this benefits all Quebec universities. McGill should be proud of the contribution this makes to the Quebec government's meagre funding of educational institutions.

Bérénice Goorah  
Science U2

ON QUOTAS AND QUALITY

I have been closely following the debate on quotas. This is the kind of open discussion we need, but also should be spread to other issues.

Nevertheless, I am deeply concerned about the Letter to the Editor sent by the SSMU Francophone Commissioner ("McGill Not Lowering Standards," February 7). Louis-Philippe Messier blindly accepts what Vice-Principal Academic Luc Vinet says without even considering critically for a single moment.

Vinet claims that there was a decline in the quota of francophone students in the past year, but never specifies whether this is a relative or absolute decline. There could very well have been a decline in relative terms. It is especially likely when you consider that McGill has significantly augmented its American student population last year. As a result, the percentage quota in relative terms of francophone students declined.

But that does not imply that there was

a decline in absolute terms. The university may have received the exact same number of applications and accepted the exact same number of francophone students. In absolute terms, the quota may have not declined at all.

Relative measures are usually unreliable because they often fluctuate (in this case, yearly because of the exceptionally high influx of American students).

I am neither for nor against quotas. But if we are going to discuss these issues, we should at least do so critically. And this uncritical assessment of government officials by the SSMU, on this as well as other issues, leads me to wonder whether the SSMU is truly an organization to further the interests of all students, or simply an instrument used by the administration to impose its political agenda.

Nick Kerrigan  
Arts U1

CBA OPPONENTS HYPOCRITICAL

I think the people opposing the Coke deal are a bunch of hypocrites. First, they claim to represent a majority when in fact they form a minority. Second, and more importantly, they claim the Coke deal will radically increase corporate presence on our campus, but deem other types of corporate presence perfectly acceptable.

There are several bank machines throughout our campus - Engineering building, Shatner, etc. - but they do not see a problem with that. It is perfectly acceptable. There is a stadium and an entire residence named after a beer company. But they do not see a problem with that. It is perfectly acceptable. There is currently a beverage agreement with Pepsi (I dare anyone to find a Coke product on campus). But they do not see a problem with that. It is perfectly acceptable.

Yet, when it comes to the Coke deal, this type of corporate presence is absolutely not acceptable. They vehemently protest the Coke deal when in effect all it does is replace the current Pepsi deal with a Coke deal (they have not even protested the Pepsi agreement). They exploit the misconceptions of naive and uninformed people who are led to believe that the Coke deal will radically increase corporate influence on our campus.

Our whole education system will be threatened. Before we know, we'll have Coke Studies as a minor option. And those evil corporation demons will take over our university...

Get a life.

Jeff Keplorsky  
Arts U2

# Slibel & Lander

Aw Mom! The Daily went and slibelled all over the page!

## Your forum for all the latest campus scoops

A warning to readers with weak stomachs: election season is upon us, and Slibel is fast becoming the candidate's choice forum for backstabbing and gossip mongering. Where shall we begin? **Sam Gross**, known to many as **VP Excitement**, is not planning on running again for VP Clubs and Servicezzzz as some rumours claimed. Oh, the prestige!...**Kevin McPhee** is planning to run once more for blah VP Operations & **Blah Blah**. Since he did such a blah job blabbing the blah daycare and the blah Cold Beverage Agreement has blabbed so well with the student body, Slibel sees **no reason why Keyster won't blah the competition**...The slow decline and fall of **The Tisch** is in full effect. Of particular note was the Power Point McGill and the, uh, what was it again, oh yeah, the Millennium presentation last week. (For those who aren't keeping up with such things, there's this whole millennium thing that's all the rage. Also the word "synergy.") Anyhoo, here's a news flash: The Tisch **"believes in what...McGill is!"** There may have been some doubt about this in the past, but now we know that the big man thinks that the university exists. The other speaker at the event was **VP Turtlenecks Xavier Van Chau**, who had some memorable sound bites in his own right. Among them, "This will conclude the speakers, unless there is someone to speak after me of whom I am unaware," and the soon-to-be-immortal "Now it's time to **whine and have some cheese** - I mean, have some wine and

cheese"...Election scheming is reaching epidemic levels as the two main presidential camps (**The Void** - aka Wojtek Baraniak - and **The Koch** - aka Tamara Kochar) jostle for position. After **Jaime Stein** (you know, the well-gelled greasy boy) made his high-profile endorsement for **The Koch's** campaign, it appeared that the lucrative gelled-out-greasy vote might split...With the amount of controversy that **The Daily's Pita Pit review** has generated, rumour has it the issue will go to a referendum. Stay tuned...

Got any gossip that simply shouldn't be kept secret? Of course! Email Slibel at [slibel\\_lander@hotmail.com](mailto:slibel_lander@hotmail.com). We guarantee anonymity, and your news will be reported in the first section SSMUers read in their favourite campus newspaper.



**On Track:** Whoever ordered those new **Crush lollipops** at Sadie's. A much better idea than the Proctect prostate health bars, which surprisingly don't appear to be flying off the shelves.

**On Crack:** That guy who parks his car outside of the Arts Building with the bumper sticker that says **"Proud parents of a John Rennie High Honour Student."** Congratulations, alright?

Calvin Klein model Danny continues his correspondence with The Daily:

Thursday, Feb 3

i hate this place. i'm living on a farm outside of sarasota, florida. you gotta see this dump. i was all pumped up to get down here, but now i wanna get out of dodge, bro. this place is so redneck, and the old dude, this supposed YODA of pitching, he's practically blind. basically, i'm a janitor, although most of the day i drive Tommy around in his golf cart.

i don't know man, this is supposed to be my big last chance, but i might just cut

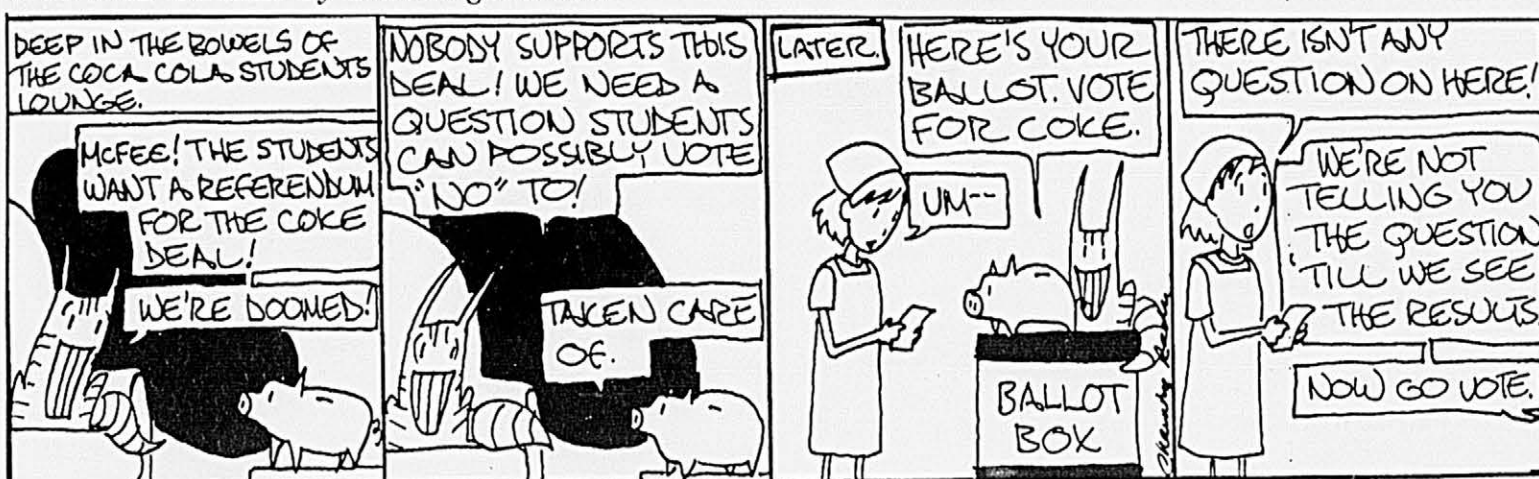
and run.

i sleep in one of the sheds. No heat, no TV, just an old record player with a bunch of old dusty records. some of them are in spanish, Caribbean retro sounds, they're pretty funny. i listened to one the other night, and when i fell asleep i had a dream that anna was dressed up like one of those chicas with the bananas in her hair, and she was singing the song to me in spanish, and i was like totally into it. wish i had gotten to say goodbye to her. Is she still at [anna@ckone.com](mailto:anna@ckone.com)?

i miss hangin, yo. i really do.

D-man

## APATHY RALLY by Channing Rodman





# To the People Who Gay Bashed My Friend and Me

This is a letter of forgiveness to the people who gay bashed my friend and me on Prince Arthur and Lorne on Saturday, February 6, at 3:30 am. It is a letter of forgiveness extended both to you and to myself.

I forgive you for intimidating me in my own neighbourhood on the street where I live. I forgive you for filling me with fear and for telling my friend and me that we were outnumbered and that we were at your mercy.

I forgive you for threatening us with violence and for cornering us and for screaming "Faggot!" and "Pillow Biter!" and "Fudge Packer!" and for following us

to my door and staying there when we went inside. I was crying on the other side of my front door when you pounded on it and sang "God Save The Queen." I forgive you for your ignorance and your bigotry and your lack of human respect.

I also forgive myself for feeling ashamed. I forgive myself for allowing you to make me feel like a coward and a child. I am 20 years old and I have been learning what it is to offer humanity and love to my brothers and sisters, yourself included. Last year I hitchhiked Iraq and I learned to understand the social humiliation of poverty. I lived in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan and I learned to under-

stand the painful senselessness of marginalization. I worked with sexually abused children in Nicaragua and I learned to understand the degradation of the human spirit and this world's abandonment of respect and humanity for others and for its children.

I forgive myself for not asserting my mental, spiritual, and physical strength when you attacked, therefore allowing the oppression of myself and others to continue. I forgive myself for not being the articulate, intelligent human being my mother taught me to be. I learned that "Silence is Death" from an 8-year-old girl who was raped in Nicaragua. She taught me to

stand up, speak out and not to be ashamed. I forgive myself for not employing what she gave me.

The friend I was with speaks French and I am thankful that he understood only half of what you were screaming at us in English. What transcends language, however, is pure hatred, and sadly, he understood yours fully.

He said to me in tears as you screamed at us through the door, "Nicholas, I would walk down the school halls as a boy and they would scream at me 'FAGGOT!' Listen to them scream at us, Nicholas. They are screaming 'faggot' at us right now but what they are truly saying is 'you are only

a piece of shit.' I am not a piece of shit, Nicholas. I have a name."

He was crying and he tried to say his name through the door, but I think you were too drunk and you were screaming too loud to hear him.

This is a letter of forgiveness. I forgive you for your incredible lack of dignity and your utter ignorance of the concept of brotherly love. I forgive you for mistaking me for simply a faggot and for not realizing that I am, in fact, a human being — with a life and a mother and a sense of self.

I am not a faggot. I have a name.

Nicholas Little

## Readers Find Tribune's Attitude Disturbing

BY SELOM CHAPMAN-NYAHU

It is regrettable to see that what I believe was a sincere effort by McGill Tribune Editor-in-Chief Paul Conner to rectify the now infamous Valentine's Day poster incident has been used by the two Tribune editors "responsible" as a defensive backlash ("Tribune Editors Respond," February 7). If Nilima Gulrajani and Rebecca Catching had taken the same initiative as Mr. Conner to apologize personally and/or attend the Black Students' Network meeting, they might understand that the emphasis was, in the end, less on making accusations than on preventing future incidents and forging a positive relationship.

Again, if they had attended the meeting, they might have realized that the use of the term "spade" was far less relevant than the fact that the members of the Tribune staff who did have occasion to view the poster, did not recognize the racial imagery. This was not just a case of political incorrectness or subtle racism; it was what many students across campus saw as an example of blatant negative racial stereotyping.

For the record, the statement made by myself and another executive member about using a dictionary to confirm the meaning of the word "spade" was used to show how easy it was to ascertain the meaning of the supposed jargon, and not as a justification for ignorance.

I also maintain that Gulrajani and Catching are in no position to accuse members of the BSN of perpetuating negative stereotypes. Not having attended the BSN meeting, any account they may have received is at best fragmentary, and therefore cannot speculate about insinuations of questions concerning the ethnic composition of the Tribune's editorial board.

The claim that it is unfair to devote a special section of the Tribune to a specific racial group while other groups are vying for coverage is weak. They do not seem to realize that this is precisely what we are trying to do — vie for coverage.

At the BSN meeting, talk of honouring Black History Month developed into a statement and a recognition of the lack of coverage, by the Tribune, of Black issues,

specifically Black issues on campus. This much was admitted both by Conner and another member of the Tribune staff who had told Akinwunmi Alaga, one of our three political coordinators, that the Tribune realized its coverage of the McGill Black community's events was inadequate. Gulrajani and Catching claim that specific articles regarding Black History Month have always been welcome in February issues, but they have made no effort to inform students of this generosity. Thanks.

In the end, any optimism I had for a more progressive relationship between The McGill Tribune and members of the Black Students' Network has been completely destroyed not only by Gulrajani and Catching's defensive posturing, but also by the fact that it appears the offensive posters were quickly removed only to be replaced by others featuring the same cartoonist.



BY KRIS RAINKIE

I am both angered and disturbed by the Hyde Park written by the two Tribune editors who were responsible for the approval and eventual distribution of an obviously racist and sexist poster ("Tribune Editors Respond," February 7).

I question the tone of the letter. How dare the Tribune editors treat this issue as if they are the ones who were offended, as if they were somehow slighted. Moreover, it is

particularly disturbing that these Tribune editors suggest that it is arguable that they "were blind to the racial undertones of the cartoon."

I also take issue with the claim that this whole situation revolves around ignorance towards the racial epithet "spade." I admit that I was one of the people who used a dictionary to discover that the word carries a negative racial connotation toward blacks. However, what sparked my little 30-second foray into research — 30 seconds the Tribune wishes they had similarly invested — was actually seeing the offending comic.

I cannot recall anyone who viewed the comic who, if not instantly outraged, did not at least question its content or its intent in regards to promoting racial and sexist propaganda. It was not necessary to realize the racist implications of the use of "spade" to determine that there was some-

thing wrong with this comic.

Nevertheless, the Tribune editors appear to be trying to defend themselves by diverting attention from their mistake. They claim that valid inquiries into the racial sensitivity and ethnic makeup of the Tribune staff that approves these posters and articles is "shocking" and somehow "perpetuat[es] additional negative stereotypes" in that it "seemed to suggest that a white person is incapable of sensitivity toward racial minorities."

First of all, the fact that the Tribune staff is racially insensitive has been demonstrated by the distribution of the offending poster.

Secondly, one group cannot be completely familiar with what offends another group and what they are sensitive to. While I don't wish to suggest that we as white people — I being white — cannot be sensitive to such issues, it is inherently more difficult to put ourselves in the shoes of other groups.

Lastly, I criticize the Tribune's claim that "to devote a special section to one particular racial group while other racial groups vie for coverage is simply unfair." I counter this by asking the people at the Tribune, why not? Why can't the Tribune, or any and all campus newspapers, devote sections or have regular articles promoting the diversity of the McGill student body? If the Tribune had done so they wouldn't be stuck in the position they are in today.

It is time for the Tribune to realize the magnitude of their errors and accept the criticisms they rightly deserve. I challenge the editors of the Tribune to tell us of their plans to ensure that this will not happen again; being in a position of responsibility such as they are demands solely that and not the pathetic excuses and defenses they are trying to concoct as justification.

Send your letters and Hyde Parks to [mcgilldaily@hotmail.com](mailto:mcgilldaily@hotmail.com) or drop them off in Shatner B-03.

Please turn the page for more Commentary...

## SFBM Responds to Critics

BY JESSE RICKARD

I was quite pleased by the feedback in the letters to the editor of the last issue of The Daily ("McGill Not Lowering Standards," "McGill Needs More Diversity," February 7). Nevertheless, I would like to address some of the criticism and clarify Students for a Better McGill's position.

It was alleged in the letters to the editor that my statement that "McGill is trying to recruit francophone students who are not necessarily qualified" makes a stereotypical assumption. One may interpret the statement as claiming that all francophone students are unqualified or no francophone student is qualified. Assumptions of this sort are yours — not mine.

The statement is merely suggesting that not all students who enter McGill because of the quota are "necessarily" qualified. What is the basis for making such a statement? The answer lies in the *raison d'être* of quotas. They are put in place precisely to allow students to gain admission to the university when they would not be admitted based on their qualifications alone.

Certainly, there would be strong francophone students who can enter the university regardless of the quota. But what the quota does is force the administration to look not only at qualifications, but also the need to meet a quota. We think this is unfair.

On a similar note, Louis-Philippe Messier suggested on behalf of the SSMU that this quota is justified because "McGill is a public university that receives 80 per cent of its budget from Quebec's government. So is it not normal that 50 per cent of its student population be from Quebec?"

First of all, the financial statistic seems highly generous, especially when considering the budget cuts to education over the past few years.

Second, an important distinction needs to be made. Education is indeed under the jurisdiction of the provincial government. However, the funding itself for education comes primarily from the federal government out of federal taxes. Both Quebec and non-Quebec Canadian students alike pay the same federal taxes. Ask any Canadian political science teacher if you are unclear about this matter. Thus, the

government is not justified in imposing quotas and differential tuition. The provincial government of Quebec uses federal money given by all Canadian students to privilege a group of Canadian students.

Quotas should be removed, and there should be equal tuition fees since the money for education comes from the pockets of all Canadians. The provincial government is not justified in imposing quotas and differential tuition.

As for the remark that McGill should become more diverse, Students for a Better McGill could not agree more. Martin Luther King had a dream: "That one day, the children of this nation will be judged not by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character."

We have a dream too: that one day, the students of McGill University will be judged not by their ethnic, provincial, or national origin, but by their merit. However smaller and less noble, Students for a Better McGill has and will continue to struggle to achieve that dream.

Jesse Rickard is a co-founder of Students for a Better McGill.





Frustrated transit riders were delayed while STCUM workers protested.

BY J. KELLY NESTRUCK

"Oh where, or where has my 105 gone?  
Oh where or where can it be?  
I must get my ass to Physics class.  
Oh where can that goddamn bus be?"  
- as sung on Sherbrooke street.

On Friday, I arrived 10 minutes late for my Sexual Ethics midterm. This was not because of any miscalculation of time on my part, but due to unfair pressure tactics being used by the Montreal Urban Community Transit Corporation — better known as the STCUM.

It takes me, on average, about 45 minutes to get from my home in Montreal West to the Leacock building. On this particular day, it took me 80. As I patiently waited at the bus stop a few blocks from my house, two scheduled buses failed to appear. When one finally did come, it began to overflow with other impatient, late commuters.

Still, I arrived at the metro with enough time to get to McGill comfortably thanks to my foresight. Alas, the metro took 10 minutes to appear. Ditto when I had to switch at Lionel-Groulx. As well, the metro conductors were keeping the metro doors open for 30 seconds at each stop, simply to frustrate the passengers.

Luckily, my Sexual Ethics midterm only took about 35 minutes to write, but I was nonetheless frazzled and probably did not do as well as I could have. (Note to Professor J. Mark Shields: How about an extra couple of points for mitigating circumstances?)

As a strong believer in unions and the

labour movement, I am once again shocked and dismayed at the silly point-less pressure tactics that public sector workers in Quebec use. (One only has to think back to how Hydro-Quebec workers deliberately toppled a giant power transmission tower last year.) Bus drivers left 140 buses at the station last Thursday. Likewise, metro drivers have been slowing down the system. There have been reports of transit workers vandalizing buses and breaking windows.

It is easy enough to stereotype bus drivers as rude, age-discriminatory psychopaths, but the truth is that for every jerk that closes the doors on someone because of their baggy pants, there is a courteous driver who will wait for someone who is running for the bus. I have been picked up on corners where there is no stop, but I have also been passed by bus drivers while waiting in the correct location.

Pundits are predicting that the tactics will only get worse over the weekend and that a strike may be in the books. I would rather see a strike and figure out another way to get to school than rely on unreliable buses. The STCUM employees don't seem to realize that these tactics are only hurting their cause. They are reinforcing the stereotype of the angry, lazy transit worker.

In an age where labour negotiations take place in the media, without the public on their side, they will lose. STCUM workers need to smarten up before their plans backfire.

*J. Kelly Nestruck has recently joined the staff of McGill's most widely read campus newspaper. We welcome him.*



## Point of Information

BY SARAH BECTOR

As a new councilor to SSMU Council, I have observed a lot within the last two months. But before I jump right into what I am going to write about I want to be explicitly clear about why I am writing this article. The reason I'm writing this article isn't because I want to slam the SSMU or put it on a pedestal. Instead, I want to offer a point of information to other students and that's it. A point of information that maybe you all know already, but that I think is worthy to bring to the attention of all undergraduate students nonetheless.

I am sure that many of you are aware that the SSMU Council is a legislative body. As such, each councilor has the responsibility to represent his or her "people" (and therefore specific undergraduate society, Arts, Senate, etc.) to the best of his or her ability. Despite this, over the course of the last five weeks there have been many explosive issues debated at Council. I will not refer in any great detail to these issues here.

Similarly, I am sure that many of you are aware that Council has a spot speci-

cally designated as the "gallery" for students who are not councilors. In case you didn't know this (I didn't know this originally when I joined council), what this means is that if you are interested or concerned with current issues facing our university, there is a place for you to voice your views.

With a legislative body, of course, the ideal means of channelling any concern or interest would be to go directly to your representative and speak with them first. Then that representative would come to a council meeting, and if appropriate, present the matter at hand. What I want to stress, though, is that for the legislative body of the SSMU Council — or any true legislative body — to work, it depends not only on the councilors but also on the majority of students or constituents.

If you can come to a meeting on a Thursday night, I encourage you to come. Come and see what SSMU does. Come with an open, honest mind though, and seek to see the whole picture. Come and question or come and support. Through your presence alone and the presence of other stu-

dents, we as councilors will be reminded constantly of what it means to be representative councilors as well as what it means to be accountable to the general student body.

I urge you: become informed firsthand. Don't wait for your respective councilor to seek you out; if both councilors and students are working for the ultimate betterment of our university and community, we will seek to hear and listen to each other. If we are both working to establish these critical lines of communication, then this will simply happen faster and everyone's voice will have the potential to be heard.

It may be easier to focus on the hot issues — such as the CBA, MCI, and others — but it is equally important, if only as a point of information, to note that the SSMU Council strives to represent all McGill students and that you, as one of these students, do have a seat waiting for you every other Thursday, if you'll only take it.

*Sarah Bector is president of the First Year Committee of Council and sits on SSMU Council.*

## GM Food Opponents Should Consider Nutritional Benefits

BY MARIA PONTES FERREIRA

The controversy regarding genetically modified foods may be quelled if the discussion is directed toward GM foods that have been nutritionally modified.

GMF opponents often focus on foods that have been modified to be resistant to herbicides (Monsanto's Roundup Ready soybeans, e.g.) or to produce insecticides (such as corn expressing Bt toxin). Slamming the door on GM foods due to these concerns will also slam the door on GM foods that have been modified genetically to be more nutritional.

Recently, a rice has been modified to synthesize beta-carotene — something that regular rice doesn't do. Beta-carotene is a plant pigment that is converted to vitamin A in the animal body. Two billion people are dying annually before the age of 4 due to vitamin-A-deficiency-related complica-

tions. The human population is now six billion and three billion people consume rice as their staple food. It would seem reasonable that we could welcome a rice variety that provides the recommended dietary allowance for vitamin A in one portion.

Though technically a feat of scientific wizardry, the mechanism by which this new rice synthesizes beta-carotene is simple. You see, rice almost makes beta-carotene. Rice produces a beta-carotene precursor compound that falls several steps short of the actual beta-carotene. Many plants do make beta-carotene, and they do so because they have the enzymes necessary to take the beta-carotene precursor compound that rice lacks and complete the pathway to produce beta-carotene.

Rice doesn't make beta-carotene simply because it doesn't express the genes that encode for the enzymes that would complete the path from the beta-carotene

precursor compound to beta-carotene. Three more enzymes are needed to complete the pathway. Enzymes are proteins, and DNA encodes protein. Thus, if the DNA that encodes for these three protein enzymes could be inserted into the rice DNA, then perhaps rice could manufacture these three enzymes to make beta-carotene. (This is exactly what Ye et al. did in an experiment reported on in the issue of the journal Science. Their GM rice has plenty of beta-carotene.)

The theoretical implications of this rice upon vitamin A deficiency are enormous. I think that nutritionally modified GM foods should be brought to the attention of the GM food opponents. There are several different types of GM foods. Discussing the implications of nutritionally modified GM foods may help to keep the general dialogue on GM foods open.

## letters



I read with interest James Yap's comments on Noam Chomsky's book *Lessons from Kosovo* ("Ushering in the New Humanism," February 7).

It is true, as Mr. Yap points out, that the book has a few weaknesses. While Chomsky tries to analyze the regrettable events which led to the military intervention in Kosovo, he fails to mention that it was the final and decisive phase of a series of peaceful negotiations and internationally conducted diplomatic discussions which could not stop the atrocities against ethnic Albanians.

When the United Nations concluded that president Milosevic's military and paramilitary forces deliberately killed large numbers of civilians in order to carry out ethnic cleansing, NATO intervened and

stopped the massacres. The free world condemned the Serbs for their heinous crimes against humanity.

As a Turkish Canadian, I take exception to Mr. Chomsky's comparison of NATO's intervention in Kosovo with "the Turkish government's aggression against its native Kurd population."

Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin form an integral part of the Turkish nation. They are hard-working, down-to-earth, and reliable people. Since its inception, the 76-year-old Turkish republic has already had three presidents of Kurdish background, not to mention generals and ministers.

Recent history reveals that as a natural course of democratic evolution, Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin wanted to have more autonomy. I wish the Turkish government had shown more tolerance in allowing those citizens to publish their own newspapers, run their own television

stations, and have their private schools.

Extremists wasted no time in reacting to the government's reluctance. They formed bands of separatists and terrorists headed by the PKK and indulged in violence, extortion, drug trafficking, and cooperation with other terrorist organizations. They murdered thousands of civilians, including women, children, and those who refused to cooperate with them.

In view of these atrocities which threatened the security and the territorial integrity of the Turkish republic, the Turkish armed forces intervened to do away with the violence and terror.

In summary, Mr. Chomsky is wrong in accusing the Turkish government of "aggression" against "its native Kurd population." The Turkish government has stopped the PKK from doing more harm to the Turkish nation as a whole.

*Aydin Yurtcu, MD*

All James Yap demonstrates in his thinly veiled glowing summary of Chomsky's latest work is a total lack of knowledge regarding international political events and international law ("Ushering in the New Humanism," February 7).

Is Yap capable of critiquing this work? Apparently not. For had Yap done any background reading on the intervention in Kosovo and international law, he would have realized that the debate in legal-academic circles on the legality of military humanitarian intervention in customary international law is far from settled.

Despite Milosevic's record for plundering neighbour states and his repeated refusals to negotiate in good faith, I suppose that Chomsky and Yap would have preferred to see Milosevic use state sovereignty to perpetrate the mass rapes, murders, and forced exile of thousands of Kosovars.

Yap's unquestioning acceptance of

Chomsky's work is further evidenced by the comment regarding the "Turkish government's aggression against its native Kurd population."

Turkey is in the grips of a tragic civil war involving the Turkish military and three Kurdish terrorist groups. Innocent civilians on both sides have been killed. Being part-Kurdish, I do not mean to gloss over the serious human-rights violations suffered by Kurdish people in Turkey; however, to equate unintended collateral civilian casualties in Turkey with Serbian ethnic cleansing and forced mass exodus is grossly inaccurate.

Strange that Yap's apparent concern for the "meager scraps of truth" in mainstream media does not extend to Chomsky's distortions of international events nor to Yap's own writing.

*C. Erben  
McGill Student*

## Chomsky and Yap Miss the Mark



# What's All the Controversy About?

## *The editors discuss the meaning of the Black History Month Special Issue*

BY VERKI MICHAEL TUNTENG AND AKINWUNMI ALAGA, COORDINATORS OF THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

**A**laga: It seems that the whole notion of a Black History Month issue may be under a backlash. Considering the recent comments of McGill Tribune editors to the effect that a special section on Black history is "simply unfair," as well as last year's controversies at York University and Carleton University concerning the Black History Month issues there, it seems that the concept of a Black History Month issue is being called into question these days. Given this context, can you as a Black person, and a three-time veteran participant of this Daily special issue, speak to the meaning of Black History Month issues?

**Tunteng:** Well, why don't I ask you something. Do you sympathize with the argument that devoting an issue to one cultural group would undoubtedly exclude others?

**A:** Hold on. The idea is not to exclude

other groups or topics. In fact, this year The Daily is going to be covering other news items as well. The difference is that there is a particular focus, on one level, to honour and officially recognize Black History Month. But also on another level, it represents a concerted attempt to make up for the fact that, as a minority people, our issues do get the kind of coverage they deserve. Everybody should get an equal amount of coverage. These kinds of arguments, that we are excluding people, particularly disturb me because they are arguments that are used to hold on to privilege.

At the same time, it denies the fact or it downplays the fact that as a dispossessed minority group we don't get sufficient coverage. And I am not trying to negate the fact that other minority groups might not get adequate coverage. If anything, a Black History Month issue should add to, rather than subtract from, a case for more coverage of all minority groups in our multicultural society and university.

My disappointment arises from the fact

that at the end of the day a Black History Month issue is a band-aid attempt to deal with historically entrenched disadvantage and here we are having to fight for it. In the framework of unequal distribution in a capitalist society, the disadvantaged will have to vie for fragments and band-aids.

However, there is another way of viewing Black History Month special editions. Black History Month is a time when the federal and provincial governments of our multiracial Canada join us in celebration of our culture, a culture which it has historically excluded, exploited, and systemically disadvantaged. It is a time when Canada explicitly honours our traditions and examines our issues. It is in this context that The Daily or any other newspaper honours this official month with special coverage on Black people. What's wrong with that?

**T:** One thing that I very much admire about the Black History Month issue is that has the effect of uniting Black people from all corners of the world in a project where

the dreams and challenges of the world's Black communities are presented to the community at large.

**A:** I particularly enjoy creating this issue, the Black History Month special issue of The McGill Daily, because it provides a unique opportunity for us as Black student leaders to actively encourage Black students to get involved. To hone their journalistic or publication-related skills. To demystify the notion of certain institutions as inaccessible. And it is particularly important that we keep this in mind as Black student leaders because we know that historically, there have been barriers to our participation. And these historical barriers have left a psychological legacy of rejection and even a mentality of self-exclusion. And the only way to eradicate this legacy is to take deliberate steps, in this case to engage in the active recruitment of Black students on campus to get involved, to carry their issues, to tell their story.

**T:** It is a wonderful forum but it does have its dangers. One obvious danger being that when you have one issue, what

happens for the rest of the year when issues of concern to Black students are raised?

**A:** This is exactly why I am saying that on one level the Black History Month issue represents a band-aid approach. But you see the beauty of it, is in terms of actively encouraging Black students to get involved, in assisting them in the development of their journalistic skills, is that sometimes they carry on working with The Daily or the newspaper in question. I know for a fact that it was her experience with the Black History Month issue of The Daily that incited Rhodes scholar Melanie Newton to get interested in publishing and later she became co-ordinating editor at The Daily and other Black students followed the exact same route. I, myself, feel more comfortable and at ease with publications after my first Black History Month experience.

The Black History Month special issue represents a deliberate institutional step to confront or readjust historically entrenched racial barriers and racist mentalities, the same mentalities that built institutions like McGill in Canadian society.

# On the Future of the Black Community

## *An interview with former US Senator Reverend Darryl Gray*

BY AKINWUNMI ALAGA

**R**everend Gray is Pastor of the Union United Church. He is the host of CJNT's television program Urban Soul: Sights and Sounds of Montreal's Black Community. He is also a former Kansas State Senator.

**Alaga:** As a Black leader and political activist, what do you think are some of the challenges facing the Black community?

**Gray:** Well, the concerns we're going to be faced with as Black people entering into the 21st Century are money, or the lack thereof; economic development that is sustainable; and technology. We need to become familiar with technology so that we can move into the reality that drives this world.

We need to look at the drug culture in our community, it is still a very real problem in our community, it is killing our people and putting our Black men in jail. Education is key, we need to push education down our childrens' throats if we have to.

I should mention the justice system, it is not fair to Black people, it is not fair to poor people, it never has been. There have been some accomplishments like the recent appointment of the first Black judge in Quebec Superior Court, Juanita Westmore-Traore. But she is only one person, there are not enough Blacks in the justice system to bring sensitivity to it. Talking about the penal institutions we are disproportionately represented in jail.

One of the last things is the whole idea of resolve, we need to realize that we have come this far by our faith. We have a histo-

ry of struggle and accomplishment, we have done great things as a people inspite of the odds that have been against us. These are the key issues that I am dealing with everyday.

**A:** Once I had the privilege of hearing your sermon about the role of the church as an institution in the Black community. Given these circumstances, could you elaborate on that role?

**G:** The Black church in North America in particular has been the backbone of our community, in Montreal it is no different. I am pastor of Union United which will be 93

**A:** What could Union United be doing better?

**G:** I think that what we need to do is involve our young people more in the decision-making of the church, in the leadership of the church....We continue to say that the youth are the leaders of tomorrow, well I don't agree, I think that the youth are the leaders of today....We need to deliberately develop our youth right now.

**A:** Do you think that as Black people in this multicultural society called Canada that we should be focusing on building our own institutions or rather should we, as

and segregation?

**G:** Even in a multicultural society we have to have our own, which means yes, we have to be prepared to live and work in an integrated society as equal partners, not less than but as equal partners, at the same time we have to have our own. Atlanta, Georgia, for example has more Black millionaires than anywhere else, they have Black banks, Black insurance companies, Black contractors. What Black contractors do we have in the city of Montreal?

**A:** Are we sure that that is where we want to go, you are talking about Black capitalism. Black capitalism, especially within the framework of segregation, sounds a lot like "Give us the opportunity to exploit our own people."

**G:** No, no, no. No, I didn't say anything about exploitation. I said self-determination. There is a difference. We are talking about Black people who are providing services within our community...and in a perfect community they will contribute something back to the community.

**A:** In a perfect community, yes, but we are dealing with the real world.

**G:** Yeah, but I think that there are still a lot of people even in this real world who are contributing back to the community. I would agree with you that there is probably a large percentage that is not doing this but what I would say to people in that situation is that you have to support those who support you, Black businesses or White busi-

**" I believe that racism is alive and well in Canada, in government, in the corporate community. "**

years old this year. It has the oldest Black congregation in Quebec. This church was founded because Black folk were not welcome in predominately White congregations. This church has encouraged education and economics, it has pushed for social justice and social action; it has provided leadership.

I think that the church is still the centre point in our community. Union United has a meals-on-wheels program and we take food to the hungry, we clothe the naked, we have a clothing bank here, we visit the sick, we have a prison ministry here... we have a legal information program.

Canadian citizens, be concentrating on increasing our representation and participation in broader existing institutions of Canadian society?

**G:** We should do both. We need to strengthen our institutions within our community. We need to build our own, it is all about self-determination and the church encourages it.

**A:** What I am trying to touch on is how do you mediate in a multicultural society between the opposing poles of integration

nesses. If the Bank of Montreal is not supporting your community then why are you putting money in the Bank of Montreal, it's called withdrawing your enthusiasm, some people call it boycott, now I do not have a problem with that.

**A:** Why this need for self-determination? Are there any palpable barriers in existing Canadian institutions?

**G:** Sure there are....Racism is very real in Canada. It is deliberate....An author in the United States talks about the conspiracy to destroy Black males. I believe that racism is alive and well in Canada, in government, in the corporate community.

**A:** You seem to talk about the States and then refer back to Canada. Don't you think that there might be problems in doing so? The Canadian context and American context are different. We are talking about different demographic, social, economic, and political situations.

**G:** You think Kellogg's is any different in the United States than it is here?

**A:** I think History is different.

**G:** I am talking about a North American experience. Black folk face the same issues in Harlem as they do in Halifax. They face the same hardship because they are Black regardless of where they are. It has nothing to do with where you are, it is the fact that you are Black. The reality is the same the difference is that the Canadian story has never been told.



# Addressing An Epidemic

## *Strong leadership, more funding needed to combat AIDS in Africa*

BY VERKI MICHAEL TUNTENG

More than 32 million people worldwide are currently infected with one of the most horrifying diseases in modern history: AIDS.

Several weeks ago, United States Vice-President Al Gore made a moving speech to the United Nations Security Council, in which he proposed \$150-million in funding to combat the disease. This funding, which requires approval from the US Congress, would be directed towards areas where rates of infection are alarmingly high, most notably sub-Saharan Africa.

What now remains is the far more complex goal of implementing concrete policies that will lead to the realization of the ambitions outlined in this renewed US initiative. These include reducing the stigma associated with AIDS and strengthening the health infrastructure in order to prevent and adequately treat the disease.

The figures on AIDS in Africa are disturbing. To date, 60 per cent of all deaths caused by AIDS occurred in sub-Saharan Africa, a region containing fewer than 5 per cent of the world's inhabitants.

According to UNICEF estimates, AIDS will have made orphans of 13 million children by the end of this year. Life expectancies in many African countries have tumbled dramatically, to as low as 37 years in Zambia. On a continent ravaged by war in 1999, AIDS claimed 10 times as many lives as armed conflict. This disease has not spared civil servants; Vice-President Gore pointed to rates of infection among members of the military that are threatening to disrupt the political stability of the region. In sum, AIDS threatens a generation of economic and political advances.

### SPENDING MORE ON JET PLANES THAN AIDS

A lack of resources and a low level of public awareness are the greatest obstacles faced by those who wish to contain the AIDS epidemic in Africa. As a result, HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) and AIDS sufferers face both the stigma that comes from a public which could be better educated about the disease and the heartbreaking reality that treatment will likely be unaffordable or unavailable.

Dr. Mark Wainberg, president of the

International AIDS Society, argues that any successful initiative to reduce the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS must emanate "from the highest level of political leadership. Educating children is important, but [political] leaders must use every available opportunity to talk about AIDS."

On the matter of leadership, Dr. Wainberg is harshly critical of Africa's governments, pointing to the misguided allocation of scant financial resources as an "abdication of responsibility" on the part of political leaders.

"South Africa spent more money on fighter jets for its army than combatting AIDS," Wainberg said, adding that Ethiopia as well has spent more on its war with neighbouring Eritrea than on its far more deadly AIDS problem. To be fair, the phenomenon of countries spending disproportionate amounts on their armed forces is hardly unique to Africa. While it would be difficult to argue that Africa's leaders are thoroughly indifferent to the effect AIDS may have on the future of their compatriots, profound changes are necessary in order for Africa's people to be well informed about this disease.

### RAISING THE STATUS OF WOMEN IS KEY TO COMBATTING AIDS

According to Esther Muoso, a journalist with the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, improving the status of African women is an essential element of any successful AIDS policy.

"A woman is not expected to participate in important decisions," Muoso explained in a recent interview. "[She] is considered to have no right even to ask a man to wear a condom, and when it comes to sex her duty is to oblige. She is used as a sex object and expected to suffer in silence." Ms. Muoso is also in favour of making latex condoms — still the only means of preventing HIV transmission through sexual contact — widely available to the general population.

Professor Sam Noumoff, of McGill University's Department of Political Science, agrees that any strategy aimed at combatting AIDS would have to include the "education and empowerment" of women. According to Noumoff, women need to have greater input on matters related to sex. "Simple phrases such as 'No condom — no sex!' need to become widely

accepted," he argues.

Professor Noumoff also advocates the creation of national networks of health clinics with a strong presence in rural areas, aimed at educating citizens about sex and AIDS. They could be instrumental in altering practices currently incompatible with halting the spread of the disease.

### MAKING A HABIT OF TALKING ABOUT AIDS

Uganda, which has seen a significant drop in rates of HIV infection, was hailed by Vice-President Gore as "powerful proof that we can turn the tide against AIDS." Wainberg credits this fact in part to Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni, who "makes a habit of talking about AIDS" at public appearances. He also noted that Museveni, well respected at home, had the courage to lend his credibility to educating Ugandans about the threat presented by the disease.

Courageous leadership mixed with grassroots approaches to health and education are key elements in combatting the AIDS epidemic. The best solutions must emanate from sensible public policy on the part of African governments.

## The Impact of AIDS on a Southern African Country

BY JESSE CLARKE

LILONGWE, Malawi (CUP) — It's December 1st, 1999, World AIDS Day in Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi, a country in Southern Africa.

At the daylong festival in Lilongwe, hours of stirring speeches, moving music and joyful dances are taking place in the country's national stadium. The joyful air of the program, which is co-sponsored by Chishango, the national condom company, defies the seriousness of AIDS in Malawi.

Malawi's borders, defined by British colonial powers during the late 19th-century 'Scramble for Africa,' make it a long narrow country, hugging the shores of Lake Malawi and bordered by Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia. Within this long, narrow strip, live roughly 10 million people, 89 per cent of whom are subsistence farmers. As of 1995, some 25 per cent of these 10 million people have AIDS.

Malawi, unlike the renderings of exotic Africa typically found in the Western media, is a complex place. Far from being part of an unknowable, mysterious continent, Malawi in 1996 faced many challenges and opportunities that are both universal and mundane. One of the main challenges is HIV/AIDS.

A great deal of ink has been spilled in the Western media about the problem of AIDS in Africa. For many in the West, African AIDS is almost a disease unto itself. Western journalists construct a vision of a whole continent stricken with disease. Africans, already seen as victims by those in the West, are further victimized.

Just as HIV/AIDS in North America has been falsely linked to the unique behaviours of a marginal group — gay men —

African AIDS is inextricably linked to Western racist assumptions about the promiscuity of African cultures.

Although the hand-wringing tone of much of the writing about this problem has further marginalized AIDS in Africa, it still serves to highlight a real and growing problem.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)'s State of the World's Children 2000 report, Malawi is one of eight countries with the highest HIV prevalence in the world. National figures from 1995 put Malawi's urban HIV prevalence rate at 25 per cent, and the situation has worsened in the past five years.

Malawi's 'top-eight' status has had a tremendous impact on its health and economic development.

Life expectancy has dropped from 51.7 to 39.3 years, while infant mortality rates have jumped from 126 to 138 per 1,000 children. Two hundred and seventy thousand Malawian children, like my colleague's nieces, have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

Such an epidemic is less and less comprehensible here in Canada where new combinations of drugs are enabling HIV-positive people to live longer and healthier lives. But in Malawi, where the total health budget per HIV-positive person per year is \$8.94 (US), the most basic medicines are out of reach.

Despite the rapidly spreading epidemic, public opinion about HIV/AIDS in Malawi remains sharply divided. Many Malawians resolutely deny the existence of HIV, preferring to avoid the stigma as the evidence

mounts around them.

Other Malawians are aware of the growing crisis and are working hard to prevent it and mitigate its effects.

"Since I graduated from college in 1992, I have lost 25 friends to this disease," explained Leonard Zondetsa, an HIV/AIDS prevention co-ordinator working in the country's capital. "How can I be silent? My own sister has also died and my parents refused to believe what had happened to her. But I told them the truth!"

Unfortunately, Zondetsa's attitude remains the exception in Malawi. The

social pressure they face to accept sexual advances of boys. For many adolescent girls in Malawi, sex is transactional, an effective way of getting what you want in a society that does not give them a real voice.

A primary schoolgirl interviewed by a University of Malawi researcher sums it up like this: "If the girl borrows or takes something from the boys, they say the girls should pay back with sex."

Refusing sex or insisting that their partner wear a condom can expose girls and women to the more immediate dangers of rape or physical abuse, as either can be seen as signs of mistrust or infidelity by some jealous partners.

Poverty, a pervasive problem in Malawi, contributes to the spread of HIV/AIDS among both men and women.

UNICEF considers the under-five mortality rate to be a key indicator of human development — Malawi's rate is 7th from the bottom worldwide.

Many researchers make a direct link between economic status and vulnerability to HIV. Mubina Kirmani and Dorothy Munyakho examined this link in Sub-Saharan Africa.

"Reduced economic power promotes prostitution and other high-risk behaviours and makes condoms less available," the two authors argued in a recent article.

Despite the grim cycle of HIV/AIDS contributing to poverty, and poverty contributing to HIV/AIDS, presented in that article, there are signs of hope.

Zondetsa's programs provide support to school-based "Anti-AIDS" clubs, community AIDS committees that provide both prevention and support services, and youth

“ Political leaders must use every available opportunity to talk about AIDS. ”

widespread denial of the AIDS epidemic is a legacy of the Banda dictatorship.

Banda suppressed information about AIDS in Malawi, fearing it would ruin the country's tourist image. By the time he resigned in 1993, the epidemic had already taken hold.

The rapid spread of AIDS in Malawi can be blamed on a intricate mix of social and economic factors. Poverty and women's marginal status have much more to do with AIDS than any exotic practice or promiscuity. The lack of power for women in Malawian society contributes to their increased risk of contracting HIV.

In the adolescent age group 15-19, girls are five times as likely as boys to contract HIV/AIDS. The explanations for this chilling fact include girls' greater physical vulnerability to HIV as well as the extreme



AIDS has ravaged rural African areas.

theatre groups that traveled the district performing dynamic plays and songs containing AIDS prevention messages.

One group in particular, the 'Area 25' AIDS prevention youth group, was and continues to be a powerful force for change in the community. With a grant from UNICEF, we helped the group organize training as peer counselors. They opened an HIV/AIDS peer counseling centre in a storefront in the busy market of their neighbourhood.

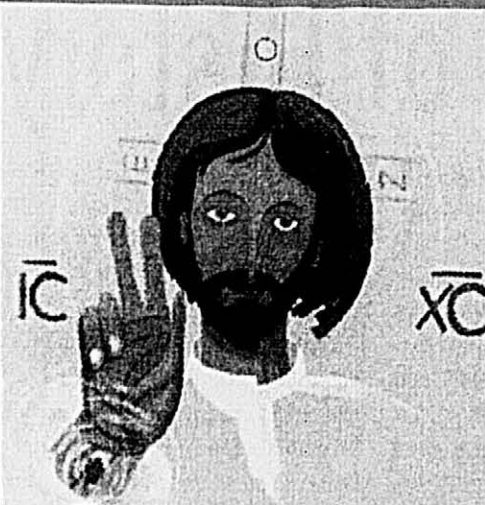
The centre, which provided free condoms, accurate information, social activities and an attentive ear, attracted 15 visitors per day in its first week of operation.

Many youth groups have also developed small business training programs and provided start up funds for members who want to find productive employment.

These youths, who show incredible energy, initiative, and enthusiasm in the fight against HIV/AIDS, are only one of many hopeful signs for Malawi in the year 2000.

These hopeful signs are only a beginning. If change and prevention are to occur, large-scale political will, economic self-help programs, better education and access to AIDS drugs are essential components. Fifteen years into this epidemic, many mistakes have been made. Has anyone learned from them yet? Perhaps we'll see in the next 15 years.





## Jesus Christ

The name of Jesus can be associated with wars, slavery and colonialism – all of which have cost lives and freedom. Christianity served as an ideological rationale for Europe's colonizing crusades into Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Despite these facts, Jesus Christ's philosophy was not behind the evil atrocities that perpetuate his name. He preached pure love, regardless of race or ethnicity. He never advocated violence or wished harm to any people. "Peace I leave with you; not as the world gives, do I give to you."

# 5 Most Influential People in Black History

Chosen by Black Students' Network  
Synopsis by Uchechi Chuta

One of the most popular political prisoners of the 20th century, Nelson Mandela spent over 28 years in jail for taking a stand against apartheid.

Mandela, along with other members of the African National Congress, fought systemic racism by discouraging foreign investment in South Africa and by creating social instability. He was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment on drummed-up charges of sabotage.

"I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination," he said before his sentence. "I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal, which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

It was the dream of liberty that carried him on in prison. In the 1980s, he rejected South African Prime Minister PW Botha's offer of freedom if he renounced violence, though shortly after his release in February 1990, Mandela and his delegation agreed to the suspension of armed struggle. Mandela's hard work was rewarded when he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993, and became the first democratically-elected president of South Africa in May 1994. He retired from public life in 1999.



## Nelson Mandela



## Malcolm X

Malcolm X was one of the most influential civil rights activists of the 1960s and is considered to be the architect of Black Nationalism. He was instrumental in the growth of the Nation of Islam which is the second-most popular religion among American Blacks.

Malcolm X's most famous quote "By any means necessary" has been interpreted in several ways to justify various forms of political protest. Many black youths, at some point in their lives, have directly identified with Malcolm X's message and tried to enact his philosophy of Black Power.

Bob Marley was a man who preached love and peace in his songs. He told his listeners that all the words in his songs, which often addressed issues of unity and freedom, had a political and social interpretation.

Marley popularized reggae and put it on the world map of music. His album *Exodus* was declared by Time Magazine to be the album of the century. His greatest achievement was when he headlined the Zimbabwean (former Rhodesia) independence celebration in 1980.

Marley was a Rastafarian and he obeyed this call to the letter. When he injured his toe playing soccer, and it turned out to be cancerous, he refused to amputate the toe because this would have gone against his beliefs. The cancer spread and resulted in his death at the young age of 36.



## Bob Marley

Wole Soyinka was the first African Nobel Laureate in Literature. Apart from his writings, he has also been a central figure in the politics of his home country, Nigeria. In 1967, the Eastern region of Nigeria unilaterally declared itself a country and formed the now defunct Republic of Biafra. During this trying period of Nigeria's history, Soyinka visited the leader of Biafra, Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, to negotiate and avoid war. Unsuccessful, he returned to Nigeria and was subsequently arrested and jailed for being a Biafran spy. While in jail, he wrote a memoir called *The Man Died*, which was given wide praise and acclaim worldwide. In 1970, the war ended, leaving 3 million Biafrans dead.

The annulment of the 1993 democratic elections in Nigeria transformed Soyinka into a full-time pro-democracy activist. Soyinka was wanted by the military junta in Nigeria, forcing him to flee into self-exile. But being abroad did not silence his voice. He canvassed world leaders to pressure the Nigerian government to accept democracy.

Soyinka has always defined himself as an Africanist. He has extensively studied the metaphysical systems and the philosophical ideas of African society. His literary works and thoughts are based on his understanding of his Yoruba culture.



## Wole Soyinka



# February is Not My Only Month of History

BY TOKUNBO OJO

I have been moved to tears in my attempts to make sense of why February is the only month in which people of my colour remember that they have history that needs to be celebrated.

Is February different from any other month in the history of the Black people? Why it should be the only month for me to celebrate my history? Does my history start and end in February alone? Is it only February that I have to put on my free flowing Babaringa and Agbada to show my cultural heritage? And after February, I shall shrink deep into a cocoon of silence till another February when I become visible to the white and other communities?

Strategically, we reinforced our sense of exclusion from the global culture with our acceptance of February as the only month for celebrating the achievements of the great Black personalities in arts, medicine, literature, religion, technology, and others.

As a Montreal-born young man who

spent over half of my 24 years of living in Nigeria, I know cultural insensibilities and hybridity of many Black people in North America have made them internalize and institutionalize their differences.

They have been exposed to the misrepresentation of Black cultures by the media and educational system. Whiteness, the educational system taught them, means economic and political superiority, while Blackness symbolized low social status and arduous labour. As Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray confirmed in their *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*, (a devilish book written for the idiots, I call it), Black people – wherever they live on Earth – are genetically inferior to white people.

Really, the celebration of the achievement of Blacks in all walks of life is vital to countering this negative portrayal of African or Black culture as misogynist and uncivilized, needing to be civilized by Westerners. But does a month focus on the black people's

achievement change this stereotype?

No, I say.

In fact, being visible only in February has made the so-called white historians and experts on African affairs, who have never stepped their feet on African soils, label us people without culture and history.

"Perhaps in the future there will be some African history to teach. But at present there is none," said Oxford university historian Hugh Trevor-Roper.

"There is only the history of Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness...and darkness is not the subject of history."

This kind of racist comment could be made against us because we are focusing all our energies on celebration of individual achievement rather than our greatness as one viable community.

It is not surprising that at the dawn of the 21st century, Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy* and *The Colour of Purple*, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which portrayed Blacks as uncivilized beasts and savages, are still among the prominent

books in many literature courses in many high schools, colleges, and universities in the North America.

"The real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which this age-long attitude has fostered, and continues to foster in the world," said Chinua Achebe, a Nigeria born novelist. "And the question is whether a novel (*Heart of Darkness*) which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art. My answer is: No, it cannot."

I believe it will take more than just a yearly Black History Month to wipe out the racist assumptions about the Black people. A month of pomp and pageant of individual achievement is not what we need as a community in the midst of racial tensions. Black history and achievements need to be celebrated every second, whether they like it or not.

Therefore, we need to reawaken our consciousness and reconstruct our cultural identity and image in the face of alienation. We've had enough of these

hyphenated identities: African-American, African-Canadian, and African-so-so. Is it a crime for a Black kid born in Montreal or New York to be just Canadian or American?

Truly, our root is in Africa, and I am not asking for the rejection of our motherland. But, nonetheless, if a white kid with roots in Europe could be just a Canadian or an American, what about the Black kid? What is sauce for goose, it is also sauce from the gander.

Mere labeling of Black children with their roots or parents' place of birth is another way of telling them, "They're immigrants just like many of their parents and they don't belong here."

I don't need any more politicized identities such as "niggers," "negroes" or "African-so-so" to be visible in a society that is ridden with injustice and inequality.

Visibility of my blackness does not come with a month remembrance of black heroes and heroines. It comes with a united and strong community that serves as a network of security and love in this 21st century.

## Good Hair Politics

BY AYESHA WHARTON

Over the Christmas break I cut my hair myself. When it comes to hair, I do not take any change of style lightly. One's hair is an extension of one's self, the icing on top of the cake of one's character.

My hair has been in dreadlocks for the past three years. In those three years I have come across varied reactions to my hair. One such reaction came from my roommate who, when she saw that I had cut them just a little, claimed that I had committed a travesty. Why is it a travesty to cut dreads but not to cut natural hair, whether the hair is curly or straight?

Dreadlocks are not highly-esteemed among people in the Caribbean. It is the hairstyle of those who cannot afford to "relax" their hair. I put "relax" in quotations because the hair is far from relaxed after the chemical torture it undergoes to make it straight. Before I lose all my friends with "relaxed" hair, let me state that I firmly believe in an individual's ability to wear whatever hairstyle they choose so long as they can deal with the consequences. When you sport a style that breaks tradition, or challenges traditional beauty, you make a political statement.

I soon experienced the politics of wearing my hair naturally happy, I mean nappy. It came from being questioned constantly about my hair with questions such as "Do you wash your hair? Can I touch it to see if it's real? Do you know

what's on your head?" Yes, I know.

I know that when I go into the workforce it will be difficult to find a job with my hair. I know that to some, dreadlocks are just a style, but to others they are an expression of one's faith or a symbol of hypocrisy of non-Rastafarians. I know that when it comes to dreadlocks and natural hair, some people fear only what they misunderstand.

We must wake up to the fact that natural hair is more than just the latest style. If one chooses to have "relaxed" hair over natural hair, one should do so cognizant of the fact that natural hair transgresses the unnatural hair norm. It is fine to have chemically treated hair, once we realize that it is part of the controlling imagery of Black women used to reinforce the lie that we are not beautiful in our natural state.

I am not saying that people who relax their hair are trying to be white. I think that the reasons given for relaxing our hair are weak excuses that attest to the negative belief we hold towards our natural hair. It being "too hard to handle" really means it's "too hard to comb," which is a comparison to the ease with which straight hair can be combed. And all that says to me is that tightly curled hair shouldn't be combed in the first place.

Having your hair natural, whatever state that may be, is an honour. It should be valued as such. This is why I say I have good hair politics.

## On Black Men's Angry Search for Identity

*No more excuses for violence and rage*

BY KJIA CHITETA JUNIOR

The recent arrest of rap star Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs on charges stemming from a shoot-out at a Manhattan nightclub poses many tough questions to the Black community.

Why do men such as "Puff Daddy" who are rich and famous beyond their wildest fantasies act like thugs rather than gentlemen? And why, despite white fears that young Blacks are the ultimate menaces to society, are their victims in almost all cases other young Blacks? These questions can't be answered by indignant finger-pointing at the violent and self-indulgent world of rap music.

Instead, we should look first to history and issues of cultural identity to answer our questions. And second, we should stop making excuses.

During two centuries of slavery and a century of legal segregation, Blacks were forbidden often under pain of death to strike back or vent their anger at whites. And since Black-on-Black violence was often ignored or lightly punished by the authorities, this left deep psychic scars on many Black men. The internalized anger was transformed into violence against other Blacks.

The consequences have been deadly. In the last two decades murder has consistently ranked high among the leading causes of death of young Blacks. Their assailants were not white racist cops or Klan nightriders, but other Black males. Unfortunately, their death toll has soared because many people still

don't get excited about Black violence as long as it doesn't spill over the borders of the ghettos into their suburbs.

But pent-up anger is only one cause of the dangerous cycle of Black-on-Black violence.

Many Black males are engaged in a seemingly eternal desperate search for self-identity and esteem. Their tough talk, swagger, and mannerisms are defence mechanisms they use to boost their esteem. They measure their status or boost their self-worth by demonstrating their proficiency in physical fights or the sexual abuse of Black women. An accidental bump, an ill-spoken word, a prolonged stare from a stranger is often taken by insecure Black males as an ego challenge or an affront to their manhood. That perceived challenge often escalates into violence.

Some Black men feel life is futile and that violence is both honorable and redemptive. Whether it's pro basketball's ex-clown-prince Dennis Rodman brazenly announcing in his best-selling book that he is *Bad As I Wanna Be*, or Puff Daddy just as brazenly naming his record company Bad Boy Records, their message is, "Don't mess with me if you want to stay healthy." Even when a young star like Puff Daddy comes from a middle-class background, successfully claws his way to the top, lives in a pricey million-dollar home, enjoys a jet-set lifestyle, possesses a colossal bank account, and dates superstar movie celeb Jennifer Lopez, this doesn't totally transform him. The internal rage still lies dangerously close to the surface. Anything, whether it's an

insult, personal challenge, criticism, or rejection, that happens on the street, in a corporate record executive's office, or in a Manhattan nightclub, can trigger that rage.

What is just as galling as the violent acting out of Puff Daddy and his associates is that some Blacks reflexively cite the litany of excuses, such as poverty, broken homes, and abuse to excuse their violence. For an absurdly brief moment some Blacks stretched reality to the outer limits by claiming that Black communities are urban jungles where violence is permissible as an ordinary means of survival.

These explanations for the mindless violence that sometimes racks poor Black neighbourhoods are phoney and self-serving. And whoever is foolish enough to buy these excuses gives a tacit green light to a handful of young men to commit aggressive violence and get away with it.

Puff Daddy hired Johnnie Cochran to defend him. He almost certainly expects that Cochran can massage the evidence against him, as Cochran did in the O. J. Simpson case, to beat the rap. Even if Cochran does succeed and he gets off, there's still a price to pay. The most immediate one is that the company with which he has a joint marketing venture may cut him loose. But the bigger price is that when men such as Puff Daddy commit violent acts, or surround themselves with those who do, they leave a long trail of victims, cast shame and disgrace on themselves and, perhaps worst of all, reinforce the notion that young black males are indeed menaces to society.



# On Being Black at McGill

BY KAREN RICHARDSON

Being a Black student at McGill is not a job for the faint-hearted. However, it is a chore to which I grudgingly wake each morning.

The reasons why the McGill University environment is stifling for someone like myself are numerous. I can barely isolate one factor from the many that remind me daily that this institution was not built with me in mind.

Perhaps it's the ghostly statue of our university's founder James McGill, prominent historical figure of Montreal and slave owner. Maybe it's my fellow students in a Local Government course debating the predatory nature of ghettoized Black Americans, or just the Students' Society I elected telling me a congress promoting African Studies at McGill has no direct impact on the McGill community.

When I received my acceptance to McGill back in June of 1997, I remember sitting down for a long talk with my father.

He recounted to me the neglected history of the Caribbean students at Sir George Williams University, who in 1969 took a political stand against a systematically racist professor. He told me of his personal struggle to be graded according to his academic performance rather than his Vincentian accent and tone of his skin.

I now laugh at how naive I was to believe such experiences were limited to the sixties and seventies.

Enter year 2000. Whether it's racist cartoons posted around campus, Andrew Tischler cancelling a meeting with the Black Students' Network without apology, or empty promises of support for Africana Congress 2000 by SSMU, nothing has really changed. All of the innovation McGill boasts amounts to nothing in the eyes of the many who see only the social stagnation on multiple levels preventing McGill from reaching its highest heights.

Shameless plug as it may be, without the Black Students' Network my brief stint at McGill would have been one semester as

opposed to the three years I've spent here. This, however, is not a paid advertisement. The BSN did not exactly transform McGill from the horror it has been into the greatest joy of my existence — not even my fairy godmother could do that. Rather, through the Network I found a group of students who, like me, were not willing to sit down while injustices piled up about them.

As a body responsible for representing the Black communities on campus, the BSN makes its decisions by consensus. It is our choice to be an inclusive student service, not bending to the shape of the institutions that seek to force us out. Though cases of overt racism are not absent from the McGill experience, the greatest problem facing McGill's Black population is dealing with ignorance. I'm no lawyer, but I watch enough TV to know ignorance does not fly in court. So why is constantly used as a defence at McGill?

In our personal relationships we all seem to understand that even when it is not our intent to hurt or offend each other, we

must assume responsibility for others' perceptions of our actions.

This is our McGill. Our institution of extra education. Our capitalist economics professors sing the praises of the oppressive forces that keep Blacks in the pit of American society. Our political science department sees no value in offering even one course dealing with the continent of Africa. We study the language and culture of Brazil without mention of its extensive class system built around race. We study, and study, and study, and learn nothing.

I refuse to be assimilated. I intend to be a defective product of the McGill machine. My convictions regarding my Black identity have only grown stronger as a result of my years here and the general inertia of the aforementioned current events on campus only serves to confirm my fears.

Maybe it is too late for McGill to become anything more than the university I patronize, but I will kill myself fighting to make it my own.

## What's Happening at the BSN

- Children's Day, coming up next week, will bring over 300 elementary and high school students from around Montreal into the Shatner ballroom for a day of education, entertainment and culture as part of our Black History Month celebrations.

- Africana Congress 2000, a critical evaluation of African Studies in a Canadian context, took place last weekend. The BSN and the Africana Studies Committee joined forces in the spring 1999 to ensure that the Congress would be both meaningful and successful. It drew students and academics from all over North America, members of the Montreal community, and other participants from as far away as England.

- In September, the BSN coordinated a panel discussion on the role of student activism in the community. The discussion was a part of Concordia University's Activist Conference. Panelists included former BSN coordinator David Austin and Professor Wesley Critchlow of the Centre for Research/Action on Race Relations.

Former member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Black Panther Party Lorenzo Komboa Ervin came to Montreal for the second year in a row to speak on his participation in freedom movements in the United States.

- Last semester, the second annual Polyphony poetry showcase blended the political, educational and social aspects of our character as a student service together, while building community. There were performances from some of Montreal's best poets including Debbie Young, Nah-ee-lah and our very own Akinwunmi Alaga.

## Bared Breasts

*Thinking Black... thinking feminist...*

BY AVESHA WHARTON

Black women have spoken out against sexism and racism in Canada since Harriet Tubman saved thousands from slavery through the Underground Railroad. Her rescue mission was emblematic of a rebellion against the status quo and a defiant and forceful repossession of not just Black women, but Black people's identity as human beings.

This precedent against chattel status revolved around the superficial: the colour of our skin. While this has been the primary criterion for our oppression, we cannot neglect the role gender has played and continues to play in Black women's systematic subjugation.

There is a reluctance on the part of Black sisters today to be involved with anything that challenges the status quo. Many Black women do not want to get involved in any political movement or protest because it can end up being too much work.

A friend of mine once told me that she would put racial equality before gender equality because it is a fight that she would have to face more often than the other.

I refuse to put one before the other. I lay claim to what every other gender and racial division lays claim to: my entire gender and racial make-up. Why should the fight of the Black man automatically be the fight of all Black people? They are not asked to put one before the other. Why

should I divide my skin from any other part of my body? Why should I have to divide myself at all?

The image of Black women as promiscuous, as breeders, or as exotic is a shallow generalization. We also have to contend with being labelled as the big, aggressive "man-woman" that no one should mess with, especially when we take a stand against the social, political, or economic injustices we undergo in this society.

On the one hand we are overtly sexual, on the other our firmness makes us manly. These racist and sexist stereotypes have enslaved Black women while oppressing and objectifying them.

I am a Black woman, a double blessing that many do not acknowledge. In

another time and another place, Sojourner Truth bared her breasts before a doubting crowd to prove that she was as much a woman as her white counterparts.

I will follow in Sojourner Truth's footsteps and bare my breasts; not my real breasts of course, but the "breasts" that deconstruct the negative images of Black females, that stop the exploitation of our labour and the denial of our rights and privileges.

These "breasts" represent the inherent beauty and intelligence of Black females, our education, and the fundamental empowerment of our minds. I bare them so that we know that we are capable of accomplishing what we propose to accomplish.

## The Daily Keeps You Informed All Week Long

### Monday

Start your week with the most up-to-date news and culture on campus.

**The Bookshelf** - A feature in The Daily since the 1920's

**Feasts of Fury** - Restaurant reviews that aren't afraid to say it like it is

**endnotes...** - A weekly forum of views on the news

**McLouse** - The Daily's staff parasite lets you know what The Man is up to...

### Tuesday

Le Délit français is McGill's only French language publication. Turn to it for Québécois news & views.

**Délits mineurs et autres délires** - commentary on the news

**French cancan** - musings about Quebec and la belle France.

**Columnist of the Week** - A rotating forum with a distinct point of view

### Thursday

Thursday's Daily gives you the news and culture you need to plan your weekend.

**Slibel & Lander** - Your source for all the crazy gossip you can't live without.

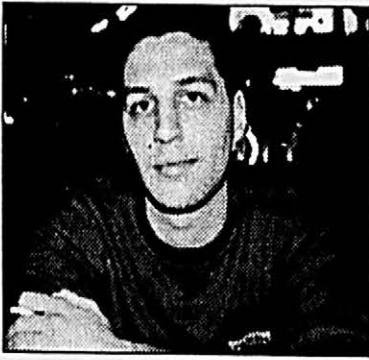
**On Crack/On Track** - Kinda like who's hot and who's not, except with attitude.

**Apathy Rally** - Biting satire with these weird animals...



# Is There Racism at McGill?

BY PIERRE-ALAIN PARFOND AND MARK EATON



**Antonios Karatzas:**

Yeah, I think there is. Especially with people who come from another country. People are not very open.



**Arsalan Safiulleh:**

I don't think that there is any racism. I don't see it from the professors because basically all they have is our student number. Many of them don't even have our names and our classes are 800 students. Many of our students come from foreign places to begin with, so at the professor level I don't see it. I'm not saying that there are no people who are racist, but as far as my friends are, I don't see any racism there.



**Fabrice Khlok:**

You deal with all sorts of ethnicities and all sorts of nationalities so you have to get along. That's the point of having a diverse student body.



**Marianne Sung:**

I see that sometimes there are professors who are from minority groups and they don't fit in as well. Maybe it's not a discrimination done on purpose, but maybe sometimes it can even be unconscious. They might not even think it's discrimination – maybe they think it's hard to communicate. I think there's some discrimination here.



**Karen Gordon:**

It wouldn't be a very overt thing. It's kind of under the surface. But you see certain instances where things just don't exactly make sense and you question it, but you can never really tell if it's racial. I haven't really seen anything outright, but I wouldn't be surprised.



**Amy Alter:**

I think that McGill is really good in terms of the fact that SSMU is anti-racist and all official things are very equilateral, but I think underneath it all I'm sure people still have their personal biases.



**Clementine Riant:**

I really don't feel like there is any racism on campus. I never found that it was a big issue here. I never saw that on campus.



**Willie Wu:**

I get along with people pretty well, so I don't see racism here. People are very affable. They're nice.



**Michelle Lee:**

There was one class I had where a student didn't know the word the professor said, and she was really rude and said "I'm not responsible for translating anything in English for you. If you have problems you should bring a French-English dictionary to class" and I thought that was really unnecessary. That was the only striking thing I really know of.



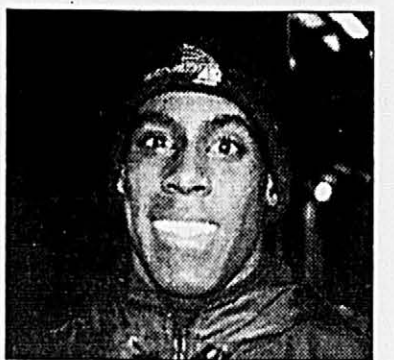
**Rahim Punjani:**

I haven't experienced any racism directly, but I've heard stories and I'm sure it does exist at McGill.



**Christian Chan:**

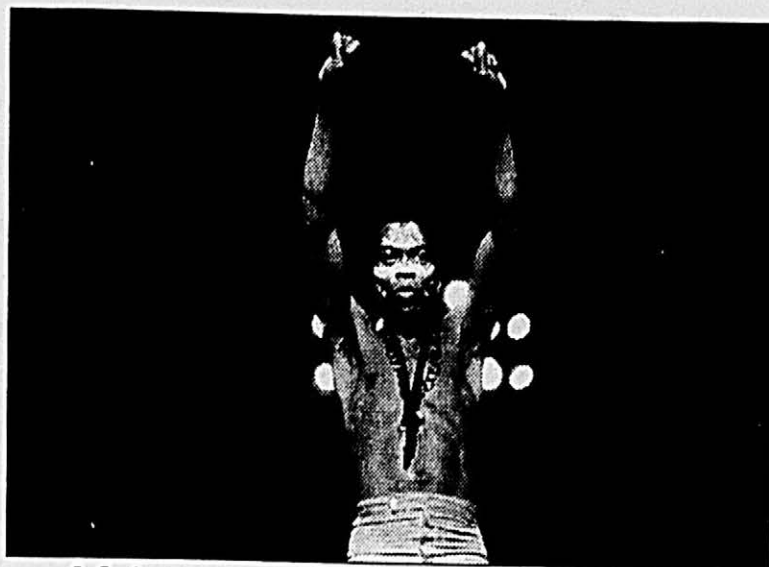
I think less than in other cities in Canada. Montreal is a very rich, diverse, with different races. I don't think it is a huge problem.



**Osei Cadogan:**

I don't know, I'm not really exposed to it. So I guess in my opinion I'd have to say no, but that's kind of a naïve opinion. You know that somewhere it does exist. Not everything is an ideal situation. But my experience at McGill has been a pretty positive one.





## African music legend Olufela "omo iya aje" Anikulapo-Kuti

BY TOKUNBO OJO

"I came to this world for a mission, that is why I must keep moving forward, not backward. Music for me is a mission, not entertainment. My music is a gift..." —Olufela Anikulapo-Kuti.

True to his word, Olufela Anikulapo-Kuti's music is a gift to the world; a gift to the oppressed, a pain in the neck to the bad leaders, and a thorn in the flesh of messiahs of corruption and injustice.

As the 20th century becomes a blessed memory, Olufela is seen as one of the greatest minds that has left a positive impact on the lives of the oppressed. This in the trouble-ridden 20th century that saw a civil rights movement in the so-called God's owned land, the United States of America.

Olufela was named by the influential London Sunday Times as one of the 100 people that turned the world around in the 20th century through social commentary music.

Born in 1938 in Abeokuta, Nigeria, to Reverend Isaiah Ransome-Kuti, a strict Anglican Church clergyman-cum-teacher, and Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, a committed feminist, he devoted over 32 of his total 59 years to music and social commentary.

With a saxophone on his lips, he preached against injustice, corruption and oppression. Much like his mother, Olufela is a populist. Often called "omo iya" (child of a witch) because of his mother's political activism that sent Alake of Egba, Oba Adedapo Ademola II, into exile, he advocated equality and justice.

Olufela, a reader and great lover of women, chose to major in music at the prestigious London (U.K.) Trinity College in lieu of medicine. His two brothers, Olikoye and Beko, are medical doctors while his only sister, Tolu, is a nurse. Fela, himself, was sent to London to study medicine but he opted for music.

However, the political activism in him was not awakened until he went on a musical tour to U.S. in 1969. It was on the tour that he met Sandra Danielle who introduced him to the Black Panther Movement in America.

Having heard political lectures by Danielle, "Abami Eda" (weird man), as some friends and fans knew him, was transformed from a love singer to singer of political and social commentary.

Social criticism formed the bedrock of Abami Eda's music. He mixed Afrobeat music with jazz and orchestra towards social change in a way similar to Thomas Carlyle, a Victorian writer who used his

unorthodox and invented syntax to blend satirical and rhetorical long prose to enlighten people of his generation about the problems preoccupying humanity.

The rhythm of Olufela's music was heavy with political and humorous overtones. As a Nigerian literary guru, professor Femi Osofisan, once noted, Olufela's lyrics were full of puns and extended metaphors, and relied heavily on street lingo, masses' language, and social problems.

He did help African music to achieve the recognition it deserves in the global music scene. A South African drummer, Jethro Shasha, noted, "in music, he was our messiah. His lyrics reflected the way we as Africans speak."

Anikulapo-Kuti's lyrics were reflection of the bohemian lifestyle, populism and pan-Africanism he stood for. The messages in the songs were often directed towards the ruling class and the aristocracy. He mocked and criticized any patriarchal and conventional structure in society.

He never restricted his criticism of oppressive systems to the African continent. He picked on world leaders and international organizations. In his 1986 album, *Beast of No Nation*, he challenged British iron lady Margaret Thatcher on human rights issues. Thatcher's clarion call for universal respect of human rights was "animal talk," said Olufela. For Thatcher and Pieter Botha (South African president during Apartheid era) were "beasts" for the atrocities they committed in South Africa in the apartheid era.

Former American president Ronald Reagan also tasted some of the doses of Olufela's "yabis" (criticism) because of his hypocritical stand on apartheid and the 1980s uprising in the Middle East-Iran vs Iraq, and Israel vs Lebanon.

At the time of his death in 1997, Olufela had about 133 albums to his credit; over 80 per cent of these had political and social justice themes.

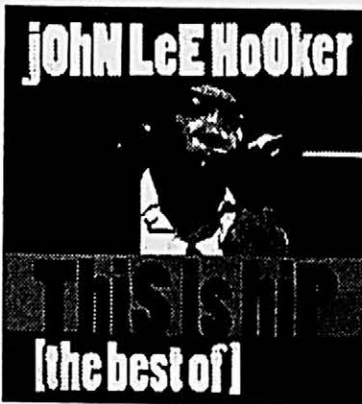
In his way, Olufela tried to make this world a better place for every one to live. Through music, he reminded the world of those things which it was supposed to have, but did not. His philosophy of life and music was built on consistency.

"Fela Anikulapo-Kuti was our black president of African music. He was a teacher and philosopher. All of us musicians have one or two things to learn from Fela," Nigerian international musician, King Sunday Ade, told Lagos, Nigeria based Guardian. "He has made his impact and I just hope incoming generations of musicians will be able to keep the light aglow."

# A "How to" Guide to Black Music

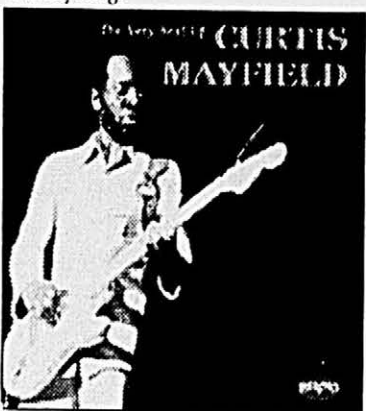
BY MICHAEL MURRAY

Black music has an amazing tradition and legacy and Black artists continue to be at the head of many groundbreaking areas in music. Black music of course has a listenership that spans all races, ages and creeds. But I find that listeners of Black music usually only know a fraction of the Black music out there, in fact many of us listeners are not even familiar with all the different kinds. Here, I am going to suggest crossovers that I am sure will make the fans of gospel, more familiar with reggae, the fans of soul more familiar with rock and the fans of roots more familiar with afro-cuban jazz. I, myself am nowhere close to appreciating all the types of Black music and what I'm about to do is planned only as a beginning of communication between fans of Black music, so that we may share all there is to offer. These are some suggestions we should all take to heart - it's music everyone should listen to - at least once.



1) FOR EAST-COAST (Jazzy-Conscious) HIP-HOP FANS

You have to listen to the blues artist **JOHN LEE HOOKER**; I have "The Best of 1965 to 1974." If you want to hear someone tell it like it is, the same way someone like Q-Tip would, John Lee is your best bet. Listen to the pride lying beneath every line of every song.



2) FOR WEST-COAST (Funky - Gangsta) HIP HOP FANS

If you don't already, you better listen to **CURTIS MAYFIELD**. The "Superfly Soundtrack" will give you more of the Gangsta content. But I suggest also the "Best of." Curtis lays down the fattest bass lines coupled with that confidence you find in West-Coast hip hop. Also like West Coast there is lots of different sounds in his songs.



3) FOR R&B FANS

For those inclined towards rhythm and blues I suggest **LENNY KRAVITZ** "Let Love Rule." For this album, his first, he was still going out with Lisa Bonet, and every tune, even if not about love, speaks of a commitment to the soul. It will open you up wide and you'll love it.



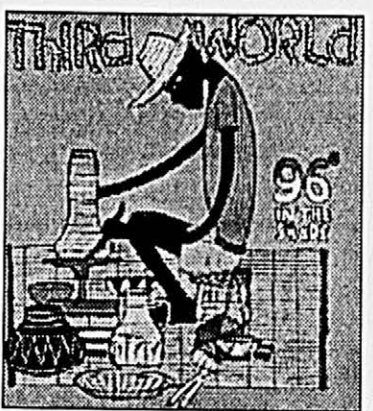
4) FOR DANCE-HALL REGGAE FANS

For you I suggest **PARLIAMENT**, anything released before 1980, and compilations are where you'll find the crème de la crème. In the same sense as dance hall it hits hard with hard beats hard bass lines and hard lyrics sometimes on the humorous side.



5) FOR ROOTS REGGAE FANS

It is a sure thing that you'll love **MONGO SANTAMARIA** - try the "Best Of", or if you want to spend the big bucks, you can't beat the double disk "Skin on Skin." Mongo has that rootsy feel and will hook you on Afro-Cuban Jazz. Amazing rhythms, amazing chants, just like your roots.



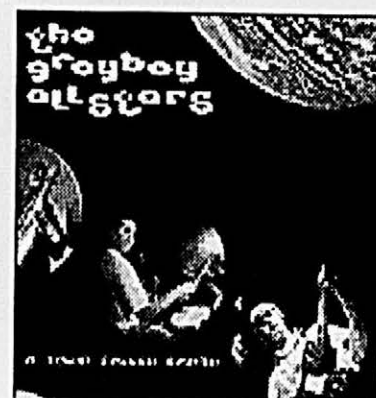
6) FOR GOSPEL FANS

You have to try **THIRD WORLD** - "96 Degrees in the Shade." This roots outfit will supply you with the layers of beautiful harmonies that you love and a different spin on a similar message. Conscious and beautiful, you will listen to this album at least twice a day for the first few weeks.



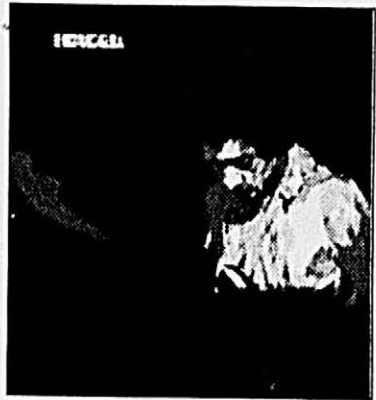
7) FOR FUNK FANS

Nothing has been as funky for at least 15 years as **DJ QUIK** - "Rhythmalism." This west coast hip-hop artist composes and plays all of his own "samples" which are live funky parts for drums, base, keyboard, or flute. It is a masterfully crafted album where every tune has a brand new funky feel with the slickest rhymes you've ever heard over top. A MUST HAVE!



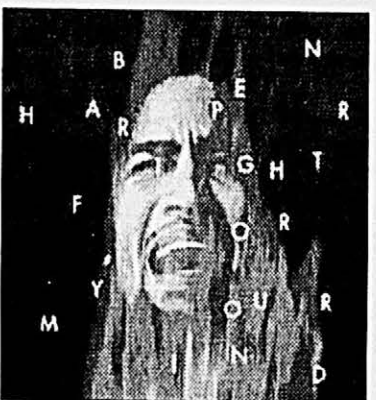
8) FOR JAZZ FANS

Since Jazz can come to represent so many different types of music, I shall refer a Jazz album to Jazz fans, that is **THE GREYBOY ALLSTARS** - *A TOWN CALLED EARTH*. This jazz is not only stellar, but it's accessible by all because of its killer groove, its killer beat. It has my favourite improviser featured on it, that is Karl Denson, the tenor saxophonist/flutist.



9) FOR SOUL FANS

I know you've heard of this man, but you probably haven't heard him in his most soulful context. **JIMI HENDRIX** - "Band of Gypsies." On this album he plays with a drummer Buddy Miles who adds that soul flavour to a solid live recording.



10) FOR EVERYBODY

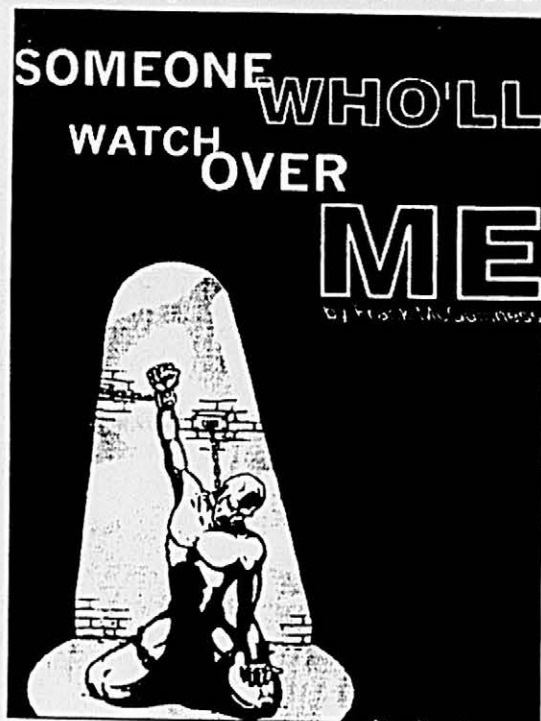
**BEN HARPER** - "Fight for your Mind." With elements from all the music that was just mentioned, this needs to be owned by everybody. Soulful, conscious, funky, rootsy, you name it. This is the center of the music that has been mentioned here.

So begins with these ten what I hope will be a never ending sharing of black music in this community. Notice I don't even touch some genres that I have no idea about (such as zouk). So someone hook me up, email me with your thoughts. (murray11@hotmail.com)



# Camels Can Talk And Act

Yellow Door performances a success



BY HOLLY GAUTHIER-FRANKEL

Didn't I say these guys would do great things? As predicted, last Tuesday night's Talking Camel production of Frank McGuinness' play *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me* scored big with a cozy and intimate audience on a particularly wintry evening.

The plot sounds almost like the beginning of a bad joke. It deals with the plight of three men — one Irish, one English, and one American — who must come to terms with being kidnapped and trapped in an underground cell in Lebanon.

This isolated atmosphere is set up at the very beginning of the show as you walk through a curtain to go downstairs. To keep the mystery alive all that can be said is that you will feel lonely, invaded by sound, and empathetic to the characters thrown into the cell. The setting is sparse and dank (as basements of houses generally are), and thanks to a bit of straw thrown around on the concrete floor, as well as a metal loop to which the prisoners are chained, audience members cannot help but feel that they are a part of the action.

The play opens to the voice of Ella Fitzgerald languidly singing the tune that is the namesake of the play. Adam, the American, and Edward, the Irishman, (played by John Ki and Josh Bloch, respectively) introduce themselves through a series of powerful monologues. Sense of time is shattered, relationships to family members explored, dissected, and mourned, and all vestiges of life above ground eventually disappear into sorrowful reminiscence.

The script is incredible, and contains a great deal of humor, as the two men wittily attack each other in order to survive. As

the play progresses, the audience is drawn deeper into the lives of two men lost in a frightening situation that is utterly beyond their control. By the time the Englishman, Michael (played by Galpern) arrives in the cell, emotions are raging, and the other two are ready for a new mind to peruse, and a different life to imagine as the infinite hours and days pass.

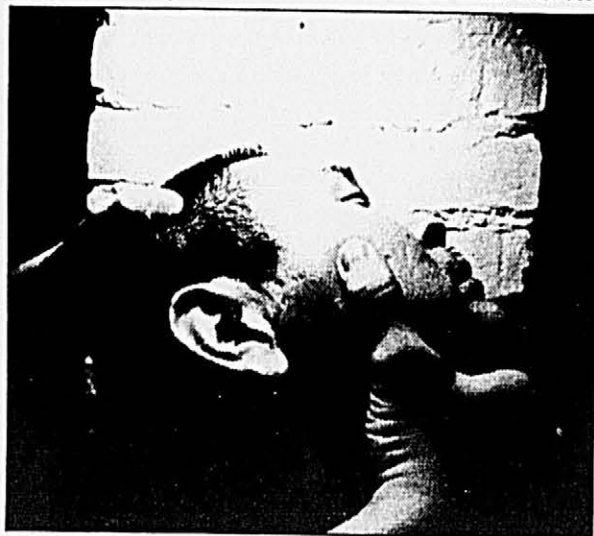
The three actors are simply wonderful, and I was very impressed by their solid performances. Each character is well established and focused. The accents are bang on and the stereotypical notions of each nationality are presented to a tee. The element of sheer physicality within the production is very impressive as well, and there were several times when I thought I was going to be involved in some brutal prison tussles. The energy from each actor was constant and supercharged as tension mounted and minds raced. At the same time there was no subtlety of emotion missing: these boys brought enormous sensitivity to their fragile characters. The play is very moving at certain points and the ending left me feeling vulnerable, sad, hopeful, curious; are all good things to walk away from a performance with.

This production is strongly recommended, as it shows the bright faces and voices of what promises to be Montreal's newest and most optimistic theatre addition in a long time!

Dave Galpern and Charles Roy, the founding partners in this endeavour, do Tennessee Williams proud — it was their very first mounted play and a wonderful success.

*Someone Who'll Watch Over Me will close tonight at the Yellow Door Cafe on Aylmer. Performance is at 7:30. Tickets are \$5.*

Check your head at *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*



A scene from Act III of *Otello*. Left to right: Gino Quilico (Iago), Antonio Barasorda (Otello), Christiane Riel (Desdemona)

## VIVA VERDI!

L'Opéra de Montréal opens season with new production at Place Des Arts

BY EMILY CROCCO

*Otello* is a masterpiece. Go on your knees, Mother, and say "Viva Verdi!" So exclaimed Arturo Toscanini, in 1887 at the premiere performance of *Otello* in Milan.

*Otello* hasn't played in Montreal since 1987, and while the premiere last Saturday at the Place des Arts is hardly a perfect production of the opera. But it is very enjoyable, and the genius to which Toscanini refers occasionally comes together with a nice balance of solid singing, convincing characterization, moving music, clever sets, and striking costuming.

At first glance the opera, scripted by Arrigo Boito and composed by Giuseppe Verdi based on William Shakespeare's *Otello*, could be the basis of a television soap opera or romance novel.

A moor in the service of the Venetian army, Otello has returned from successfully repelling an invasion by the Turks in Cyprus. Upon his return, Otello promotes Cassio instead of Iago to a higher rank. The jealous Iago exacts his revenge on Otello by plotting and manipulating events in order to destroy the moor's marriage and eventually his life.

Verdi and his librettist Boito paint this grim tragedy in bold and broad musical and lyrical strokes, and the cast is generally capable of meeting the demanding vocal and dramatic requirements of the opera.

In the title role, Antonio Barasorda is masterful in his interpretation of Otello's evolving and erratic personality. Barasorda's Otello undergoes a wonderfully tortured transition from heady moor and lovelorn husband to tormented and obsessed avenger of his wounded heart.

Barasorda's fundamentally forceful tenor voice initially lacked strength and steam for what should have produced an opulent Otello. Barasorda could be forgiven his breathlessness if he were suffering from a cold or the flu. Initially, the nasality in his voice and the resulting weak projection

certainly suggested some sort of illness. By the fourth act, however, Barasorda's voice recovered, and the tenor produced a more crisp and distinguished sound.

Christiane Riel plays an appropriately understated Desdemona, capturing a perfect blend of the purity, nobility, docility, despair, and resignation that define her character.

Riel's voice as Desdemona was most captivating. The accomplished soprano, who has appeared in *Madama Butterfly* as Cio-Cio-San for the San Francisco Opera and as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* for the Pacific Opera Victoria, was a glorious Desdemona. Whether singing a beautifully phrased duet with the powerful Barasorda at the end of the first act or delivering a haunting rendition of "Ave Maria" in her final scene, Riel had the full measure of her vocal talents.

Noble Desdemonas of the past, such as Margaret Price and Renata Tebaldi, can still be appreciated with the help of technology, and Riel has not yet acquired quite their touch of *morbidezza* or the savouring of words. However, by any other standard, Riel's was a very special performance.

Gino Quilico was tremendously convincing as the manipulator Iago, flipping between a charming and sympathetic friend and an evil devil incarnate.

Quilico's singing started badly in his first major piece: he had an almost impossible time completing the long scales of the drinking song. The baritone sounded out-of-breath and made the last notes of each phrase much more staccato than was appropriate for the song. Quilico represented the evening's best effort, however, and by the middle of the second act he was singing with much more confidence and strength.

Dina Martire's Emilia deserves special mention as she brought a refreshingly spirited and forceful interpretation to the traditionally submissive role assigned her character.

The chorus was initially neither powerful nor audible, but by the second act the singers seemed to have warmed up with

their shadowy but smooth *Dove guardi splendoro raggi*, and thereafter gave a much sharper delivery.

Conductor Joseph Rescigno gave the music flexibility and spirit without losing momentum, and adapted easily to the chorus's and Quilico's occasionally lost tempos. Considering his singers' sporadically unsteady performances, Rescigno masterfully led the orchestra through Verdi's demanding score.

The costumes by Yannis Kokkos were beautifully muted in their shades of mauve and brown, and Robert O'Hearn's grand sets, with their long Roman columns, were wonderfully evocative of the imprisoned existence into which many of the characters sank.

Bliss Hebert must be congratulated on the elegant stage direction he gave his large cast. There must have been between 50 and 75 chorus members, and their entrances and exits did not suffer from the "cattle-herding" syndrome of other plays.

A problem which would not have been noticeable from the first rows in the theatre but that presented something of an irritation for people sitting further back was that some of the character's facial expressions were lost in the darkness of the stage's lighting. Furthermore, from the back of the large Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, some of the singers' quieter lines were inaudible. These are problems that a few aptly-placed spotlights and microphones could fix.

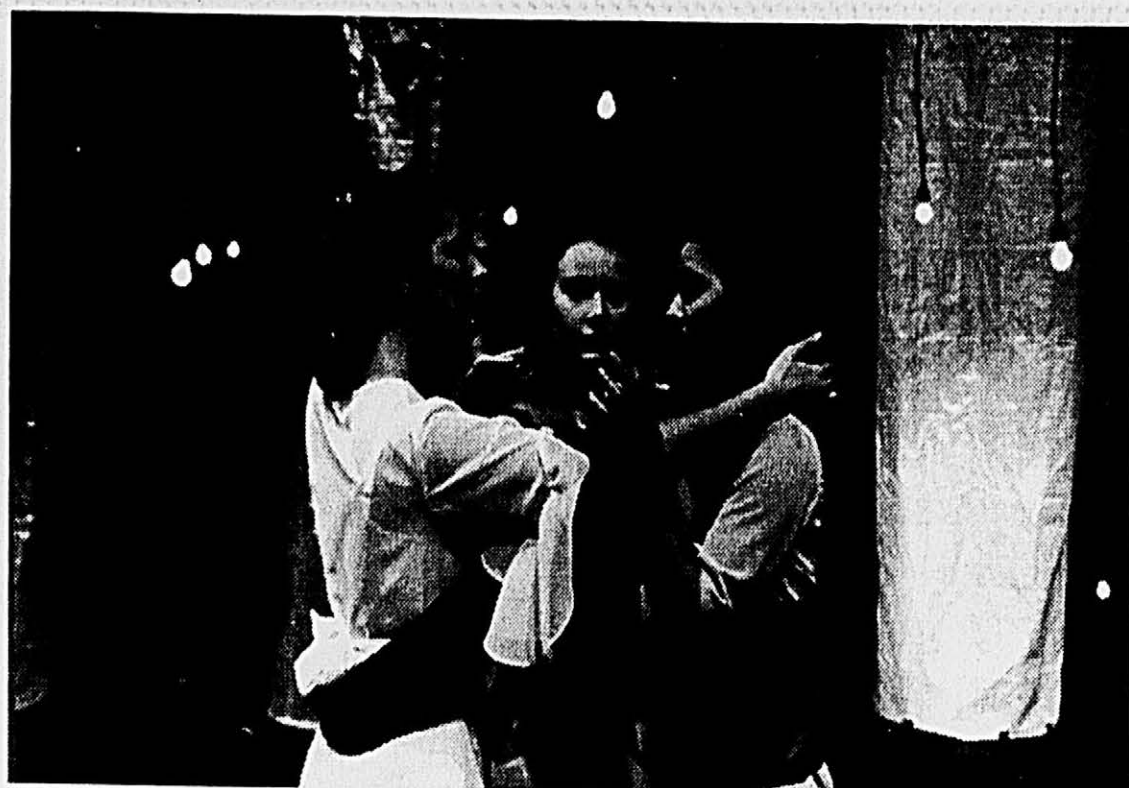
Considering the noticeable improvement in the spectacle as the evening progressed, of the fundamentally solid performances of the cast, and of the correctable nature of the show's technical flaws, *Otello* will offer its audience a thoroughly enjoyable opera.

*Otello* is playing at the Place des Arts February 10, 12, 16, and 19, 20 at 8:00 p.m. Call 842-2112 for information and tickets.

The McGill Daily is in search of poetry to print in the Culture section.

Email it to [mcgilldaily@hotmail.com](mailto:mcgilldaily@hotmail.com) or drop it off at Shatner B-03





Amy Pagnotta and Sophie Johnson play Blanche and Emily Sloane plays Alan Gray in *A Streetcar* at Moyse Hall

# Deconstructing Stanley

Theatre class endeavours to expose underbelly of Tennessee Williams

BY J. KELLY NESTRUCK

The moment *A Streetcar* begins, the audience is immediately pulled into the frenzied, despairing, hyper-sexed world of Tennessee Williams. For an hour and 15 minutes, you are thrown through every conceivable emotion in a whirlwind of sound and movement.

Professor Myrna Wyatt Selkirk's Interpretation of the Dramatic Text class has taken Williams's most famous play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and stripped it down to its bare bones. Then, experimenting with movement, masks, and mayhem, the students embark on a character study of the play's three central characters: Stanley, Stella and – of course – Blanche DuBois.

In an interesting turn, there are multiple actors playing each part. There are six Stanleys, four Stellas and five Blanches. How exactly did this calculated madness come into being?

"*A Streetcar* is the culmination of all the work we did last term, as a complete version of the play," explained Emily Sloane, one of the Blanches. The 110-375A class was separated into groups, each of which tackled a different part of the play and came up with a physical metaphor for it. The class also experimented with the different characters and turned them inside out. Then Professor Selkirk fused the production out of the students' skits. "She took what she liked best and put it together," Sloane said.

Some of these "physical metaphors" translate into an interesting set design. It is minimalist. The back wall of Moyse Hall is exposed, and the set consists of a couple dozen naked lightbulbs that descend from the ceiling. The visual effects created with these lightbulbs are stunning and at times ethereal.

The Stanleys horse around on a gigantic slide as they taunt and tease the Blanches. The whole play is a gradual slide or descent into hell for Blanche DuBois, mainly due to

Stanley's constant attacks on her.

Those audience members who have only seen the famous 1951 film version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, starring Marlon Brando and Vivien Leigh, will probably wonder where certain aspects of *A Streetcar* come from. In fact, this is because important parts of Williams's text were omitted from the movie and only subtly hinted at. Blanche's rape and the closeted homosexuality of Alan Gray were kept out of the movie by the strict production code of the 1950s.



Tennessee Williams's plays explored family dynamics in mid-20th century America.

It is interesting to see a surrealistic approach towards *A Streetcar Named Desire*, simply because it is generally thought of as a realistic drama. Indeed, Brando was one of the pioneers of the Method on the screen, a more realistic approach to acting, and was heralded for the realism he brought to Hollywood films. To see this play deconstructed is quite refreshing. The test of an enduring classic is to turn it on its head and then see if it can still stand.

Professor Selkirk, in her dramaturgy

notes, emphasizes the questions about sexual identity that Williams brings to the surface in his plays. In many ways, *A Streetcar* is a dissection of the masculinity emblemized by Stanley and the fragile femininity of Blanche. There are strong images of sexual violence and sexual perversion.

Here, the class borrows heavily from Freud. In several scenes, Stanley sucks his thumb, and he alternates between yelling, "Stella!" and "Mommy!" The Stanleys are very childlike, playing leapfrog with each

other and then suddenly morphing into sexual, animal creatures. Perhaps a more appropriate title for this play would be *Named Desire*, instead of *A Streetcar*.

For a play that relies generally on pantomime and movement to communicate, it is interesting that sound and music play such a crucial role in *A Streetcar*. Music ranging from sexual Cuban drumming to 1940s big band accompanies each of the bits. The music is used very effectively and helps sustain the energy on stage.

The only regret that I have for *A Streetcar* is that Selkirk's class did not pull the guts out of Mitch the way they did with the other characters. Mitch is the male character that I can relate to the most. There is only one actor playing Mitch (Mike Pagnotta) and he appears out-of-place in this world of multiplicity. It would have been interesting to see what could have been extrapolated from this character.

*A Streetcar* is an interesting and a fun project to watch. Unlike some student theatrical experiments, *A Streetcar* knows its limits and does not go on for too long. It is the perfect length and immensely watchable, even for those who generally shun experimental theatre.

*A Streetcar* plays Moyse Hall Feb. 9-12 and 16-19 at 8pm.

## THE ART DUMMY

# All In the Family

Touring photo-text exhibit stops at McGill

BY JOHN ORTVED

I know very little about gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people and their families. I know even less about any of the political issues surrounding these marriages. Therefore, my perspective on gay and lesbian families and their place in society is obviously limited.

I critique art sometimes, but my knowledge of gay issues and society is pretty much limited to my annual attendance at Toronto's Gay Pride Parade – North America's largest, I don't mind mentioning – where every year I drink too much and always seem to end up... Anyway, I digress.

The exhibit *Love Makes A Family* is, if nothing else, a political exhibit. It is currently being shown in the basement of the Social Work building at 3506 University St. The exhibition contains 20 or so photographs, all black-and-white family portraits, accompanied by several essays, each written by members of the said families. The exhibit is an initiative of Project Interaction, the McGill School of Social Work's effort to educate and fight discrimination and support gay-positive social services.

To list all the co-sponsors would fill this page, but theirs is an outpouring of support for this exhibit by everything from the Art History Students Association of McGill, to SSMU, to the Alumni Association. There are a lot of fingers in this photo exhibit of a pie – like I said, a political exhibit.

The thesis of the photographs and their accompanying essays is pretty simple: gay families are just like other families. It is okay to have two daddies, mommies or one who used to be the other. The point is made loud and clear and it is a valid one.

The exhibit is important and significant, yet unfortunately it lacks power. I cannot say that any single combination of text and photograph moved me. Maybe I am desensitized to what a "normal" family

is, so I don't take such images as striking. But I think their lack of inspiration lies in their settings, the ever-mundane family portrait

The essays are more potent than the photographs. Family portraits have never interested me. Not even gay-family portraits. Families are never as pretty, or peaceful, or as picturesque as they are in family portraits. Families do not experience moments that are depicted in portraits unless they are, well, posing for a portrait. Having these families posed in a family portrait style takes away from the reality of their situation and makes each subject less intriguing. They're always,

nice, everyone looks good, but they never have much personality. Good family pictures capture embarrassing moments or epic moments. Such photographs for me are far more real than anything posed.

So while the photos provide a clear visual description of each family, the power is in the words. My advice is to really take in the writing and photographs, but pay special attention

to the quotations; they are printed above each family portrait and they seem to encapsulate each essay.

This exhibit is relevant and very worth checking out. I am tempted to make an Ellen-Anne Heche joke, but the times are far too liberal for such humour. Then again, wasn't it Tom Wolfe who told us that liberals are just conservatives who have been arrested? It was. Wolfe also told us, "Not 'Seeing is Believing,'...but 'Believing is Seeing.' For modern art has become completely literary: the paintings and other works exist only to illustrate the text."

And he was right.

*Love makes a family is at 3506 University St. in the Social Work Building basement until February 18. Call 398-7059 for information and hours.*





# Lotte Has Delusions of Adequacy

*Courageous production doesn't make the grade*

BY JEAN EDELSTEIN

I am glad that I was accompanied to the preview performance of *Lotte* by an acquaintance who is even more theatrically inclined than I am. If he hadn't been there, I might have reasoned that I was too ignorant to appreciate the artistry and depth of the production.

However, thanks to my friend's second opinion, I feel justified in offering my honest assessment of the play: it just wasn't very good.

*Lotte*, starring Bobo Vian at the Q Art Theatre, is a one-woman show, featuring Vian as Lotte. Lotte is a courtesan from Weimar who had a ten-year affair with German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The monologue throws light on many aspects of the nature of relationships between men and women as Lotte details her affair with Goethe to her husband, who is played by some clothes that have been stuffed to look like a person, decked in knee breeches and a lacy jabot and topped off by a powdered wig.

In fact, the script, which was translated by director Gabor Zsigovics, is reasonably interesting. Although it started out slowly, the story definitely had its bright moments, especially when Vian directed her speech towards the audience.

Lotte is a manipulative woman who believes that she is in control of the men in

her life. Describing herself she says, "...of all the women in the world, [I am] probably most capable of defending myself against manly advances." As the story progresses however, it becomes increasingly clear that she is not as much in control as she would like to think.

Vian herself was certainly not wholly responsible for the disappointing qualities of the play. Clearly, she is a talented actress. She portrayed Lotte energetically. She deserves credit for sustaining the part throughout two and a half very long dramatic hours, performing for an audience of eight. Although at first she seemed a bit awkward in her part, her comfort level increased as time wore on and her movement and expression became more natural and convincing.

However, it seemed that Vian's true talent was stifled by the mediocre direction of the show. We knew we were in for a unique experience when the show was prologued by a blast of very bad techno music. Our confusion increased when throughout the course of the show Vian's monologue was interrupted by the lights turning off. At these junctures, the bad techno was reprised and Vian wandered "offstage" where, in plain view of the audience, she smoked cigarettes, fixed her makeup, adjusted her costume, and occasionally broke it down along with the music.



Understandably, performing for two and a half hours is stressful, but it seemed somehow uncouth for the audience to be exposed to these distinct departures from character. According to the program, the director was attempting to present the show in the tradition of Bertolt Brecht, who pioneered the "alienation effect" in his plays, in which actors present their characters in such a way that the audience is acutely aware that they are acting.

Perhaps this was the purpose of the frequent breaks. However, because when

Vian was not offstage smoking she was portraying her character in an undetached, fairly traditional fashion, the effect was a farcical one. It turned what could have been a reasonably thought-provoking if mildly boring play into a campy joke.

Tickets to *Lotte* are \$15. I found myself contemplating all of the superior things that one can purchase with \$15 during the less riveting points in the performance not to mention the \$4 that must be spent on the Metro to get there.

The list got very long. If you have a desire to feel cultured by going to see a dramatic production, you're far better off attending one of the performances now playing on campus at McGill. I haven't seen any of them yet, but I'm willing to bet \$19 that they provide a better theatrical experience than that which you will have at Lotte.

*Lotte* plays Geordie Theatre Space at 4001 Berri from February 10-13 and 15-20 at 19h. Tickets are 15\$ and can be reserved at 482-7132.

## Recipe for an Illiberal Education

*American scholar shocks and surprises*

BY MATT LEVINE

Post-modern theory is trendy, nihilistic, and detrimental to academia, argued a prominent American professor.

The audience who gathered at Concordia's Liberal Arts College last Thursday night for Dr. Bradford P. Wilson's talk entitled "Individual Rights and Academic Wrongs: The Post-Modern University" listened to a lecture that criticized liberal ideals such as cross-cultural sensitivity and the autonomy of the learner.

Wilson is the executive director of the National Association of Scholars at Princeton University.

Most in attendance were surprised by Wilson's vehement rejection of racial and ethnic diversity as central to the very concept of education. The conservatively dressed, bespectacled Dr. Bradford spoke eloquently about "knowledge valued for its own sake, [and] students be[ing] forgiven a temporary lack of social concern and engagement, for the sake of remedying a more fundamental deprivation: their lack of self-knowledge."

The reactions that followed the presentation ranged from congratulatory to surprise over Wilson's generalizations

and his condemnation of post-modernist theory as nihilistic and faddish and the study of popular culture as superficial.

One question from the floor likened Bradford's portrayal of the emergence of women's studies departments to a wrestling match. The questioner went on to conclude that it doesn't seem an

interest," replied Bradford.

The tension in the room peaked when a Concordia professor redressed Bradford for "a portrait that was too simplistic," telling him, "You mention Derrida and Heidegger and you say that what we need is a value for the classics and respect for close reading; but Heidegger returns to the

“Heidegger returns to the Greeks and argues for the study of the Greeks. And Derrida does nothing but close reading, if you've read his work.”

accurate portrayal about how undergraduate students in women's studies "come to educate themselves and grow culturally" and seem "to have a vitality that can't be recognized in the world federation that you have described."

"Women's studies programs often describe themselves as entirely political [and without] a shred of scholarly

Greeks and argues for the study of the Greeks. And Derrida does nothing but close reading, if you've read his work."

Bradford, the champion of reading the classics for their profound insight in to human nature, could only respond with irony: "Heidegger is probably a little too deep for me."

Many left the lecture wondering if Bradford's real goal wasn't simply a return to the prestige and elite of the ivory tower of yesteryear. One member of the audience, who was clearly not affiliated with any university, wondered if the gender, race, and class studies that Bradford so detests could not be seen as a life boat for students who were overwhelmed by university life. The visiting scholar flippantly replied that a floating cave was more like it, not bothering to respond in any way to the underlying premise of the question.

In closing, Dr. Bradford remarked that, in establishing its Liberal Arts College, Concordia had decided to encourage and make accessible to its students something that has been missing in action since the Vietnam War. He used his American-centred interpretation of the Canadian higher education scene to demonstrate that everyone could benefit from sensitivity to historical differences.

Such crass chauvinism begs the question of whether he had actually learned any of the beautiful and fundamental truths that he so urgently desires for everyone else.

After the lecture, a group of Concordia students were giggling furiously about how the speaker had no

point and "the life-boat" question man who seemed at one point to have been genuinely interested in the topic now merely walked away with disgust.

Dr. Bradford no doubt came to Concordia with a desire to elicit support for the idea of liberal arts education. However, his message meant something different up here than what it may have south of the border. He regularly referred back to the western tradition as if it had some value simply because it had proceeded us chronologically and geographically.

Artists, writers, photographers, therapists, cartoonists, clairvoyants, columnists, book-reviewers, copy editors, layout gurus and/or 'heavies,' polymaths, bibliophiles, members of Mensa, contraceptives, office cleaners, computer geeks and/or nerds, caterers, CD reviewers, gifted couriers, masseurs, on-spot artists, ombudspeople, hot wax enthusiasts, polygraphy interpreters, entomologists and/or etymologists, owners of 'I'd rather be 40 than pregnant' mugs, lackeys, tattoo artists, Macintosh enthusiasts, Johnny Cash, haberdashers, pettyfoggers, crustaceans, petting-zoo maintenance personnel, llamas, guinea pigs, anteaters, etc.

Report without delay to:

THE MCGILL DAILY



## EVENTS

Thursday, February 10

The School of Physical and Occupational Therapy is having an open house, from 2 to 7 pm, at Hosmer House, 3630 Drummond St.

Friday, February 11

"Ensuring Success in Literary Acquisition: Why Is It So Hard?" a lecture by Dr. Catherine Snow, will be held at 3 pm at the Stewart Biological Sciences Building, room S1/3.

As part of the STANDD speaker series, John Galaty will be speaking on "Science, Narrative and Accusation: Environmental Discourse and Policy in East Africa." 12:30 pm, New Chancellor Day Hall, 3644 Peel St., suite 322. For information, phone 398-1807.

Saturday, February 12

The McGill Student Pugwash will be hosting a conference on "Peanut Butter Causes Cancer: Science, Media and Popular Delusions." Jay Ingram, host and producer of @discovery.ca will be speaking about the challenge of communicating about science to the public. 10:30 am to 4 pm, 3655 Drummond, room TBA. Suggested donation \$4.

Tuesday, February 15

Fred L. Gardaphe will be giving a lecture on "The Gangster from Ancient Archetype to American Trickster or Why American Culture is Obsessed with the Mafia," at 6 pm, Leacock 26.

Thursday, February 17

David Farrow (aka Trevor Ferguson), author of *City of Ice*, will be speaking at the Atwater Library, 1200 Atwater Ave., 7 pm.

Friday, February 18

The Yellow Door Prose and Poetry series continues tonight a 7:30 pm, at 3625 Aylmer St., \$5.

Ongoing

The Crafty Chick Collective will be holding The Bleeding Hearts Bazaar at 176 Bernard St. West. There will be handmade books, pottery, blown glass, jewelry and more. February 12, 13, 19, and 20, from 11 am to 6 pm. For information, phone 273-3933.

Queer McGill has weekly meetings. For information, call 398-2106.

Thank you to everyone  
who has contributed to the Black  
History Month issue:

Akinwunmi Alaga  
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Karen Richardson  
Verki Michael Tuteng  
Ayesha Wharton

You guys are great!

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# CD REVIEWS



**FRIENDS AND LOVERS**  
**BERNARD BUTLER**  
(COLUMBIA/SONY)

Rock is a social agreement between norms and traditions. This way, musicians know what is expected of their music, what appeals to the public, and what sells.

But this stalls the evolution of rock, and inherently limits the musician. It's not right, but that's how genres work.

A good example of a long-standing rock norm is a basic and memorable chorus. Thus even innovative albums, for all their new and creative contributions to rock, follow certain traditions. Take for instance, a genre benchmark like Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Band: "Strawberry Fields" still has a chorus.

The majority of albums are plain reiterations of the rock format and its norms, and fail to push the genre forward. *Friends and Lovers* plants its roots right in the middle of the rock bell curve. Bernard Butler's second album is neither unique nor horrible. For better or worse, it is mediocre.

Aspiring for a more "electric guitar-

based" and "riff-driven" approach to his songs, Butler has chosen to leave out strings and extensive layering on this album. However, in pursuing a simpler, riff-based sound Butler has failed to maintain originality (and listenability).

The title track, "Friends and Lovers," and a few other songs, are rudimentary rock songs injected with blues scale riffs and solos. If this approach sounds familiar, it's because every band was doing just this more than three decades ago. Then, the rest of the songs are routine lyrics sung (i.e. "there's no easy way out") over predictable chord progressions. The one song that initially stood out, "Has Your Mind Got Away," lost its appeal upon the realization that it is identical to Pink Floyd's "Breathe in the Air" in key, chords, bass line, and reverb-laden pitch-shifting timbre.

If anything is done decently here it is the acoustic guitar and piano track, "Precious", and the sparse "Everyone I know is Falling Apart". Though both of these songs don't contain any surprises either in their arrangements, Butler's softer ballads accentuate his simple lyrics, and the always advantageous English accent.

Still, upholding the traditions of rock remains noble in light of recent trends that either water down rock (pop) or recombine it in yet another way (rap-rock). Nevertheless, to keep the genre evolving and interesting, it is necessary that rock be more imaginative than a mere rehashing of rock from the past. Bernard Butler's *Friend and Lovers* is not terrible, but it contributes nothing to enliven or innovate the genre.

—Yobei Iganishi



**KELIS**  
**KALEIDOSCOPE**  
(VIRGIN)

Good music is like cheap underwear: it always comes in bunches. Take hip-hop, for example: 1993 and 1994 were a renaissance for hip-hop. Originality ruled and innovators were blasting imitators out the box.

Then a dark period came over hip-hop. Tribe was depressed, Nasty morphed into Escobar, and Wu was collaborating with Mariah Carey.

However, in typical fairy-tale fashion, inspiring emcees (RIP Big Pun), disenchanted with the state of their culture, reclaimed the throne and brought the world of hip-hop back to a dynamic state. Recently, RnB followed a similar path. No disrespect to groups like Destiny's Child, 702, or DruHill- they all make very good music, but none push any boundaries or use music as a form of artistic expression. It's just too many groups fakin' jax.

Enter the RnB renaissance. A prodigious

group of artists drop consistently banger gems on all our foreheads. The list includes D'Angelo, Erykah Badu, Lauryn Hill, Amel Larrieux, Macy Grey, and now Kelis.

A self-proclaimed "die-hard Harlem" singer-songwriter, 20-year-old Kelis Rogers is strong, sharp, and opinionated. But rather than whining about paying her bills and wondering where her girls are at, Kelis's music carries a message.

Lyrical, her candid writing style reflects the naiveté of her youth yet still remains illustrative and unforgivingly direct (you can hear a gun cock more than once under the music). The beats on the aptly named *Kaleidoscope* are as diverse as Kelis' vocal repertoire and combine her wild metaphors ("my love is like the mafia") with equally "out there" sonic samples; however, her diversity is not an attempt to please everybody, it is a sample of what this girl is capable of.

Kelis brings realism to an otherwise pop-oriented RnB genre. One listen through *Kaleidoscope* and you get the feeling that Sade could understand her strife while Hurricane G could advise her on how to deal. It's that duality that puts Kelis on her own level.

—Joe Lacuna

**MICHAEL PENN**  
**MP4**  
(SONY)

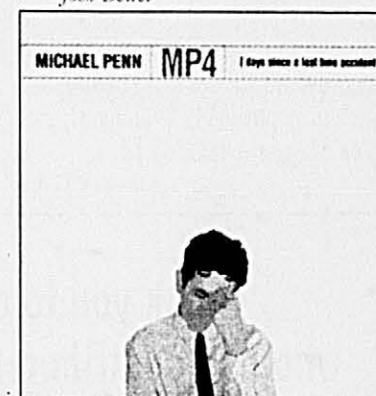
Michael Penn's fourth release, *MP4*, is yet another foray into the blurry, generic world of folk-pop, both for him and for the music industry in general. This album is so original and timely, there's even a song about the millennium!

I guess there's no avoiding making a self-indulgent album, though, when you produce all the songs but one, play all the guitars and bass, and do all the lead vocals. Look out for Penn's production on the new Wallflowers album.

There are literally no hooks on the record, which isn't to say that an album needs hooks to be good, but if you can't hum any of the tunes after listening to the thing three times, there's a problem. The instrumentation is painfully consistent, usually consisting of electric and acoustic guitars, bass, and drums, and maybe some distortion or a keyboard effect in the bridge.

To Penn's credit, there are some pretty bluesy undertones on the album, notably in the chorus of the fifth track, "Footdown." He quickly lets the listener down, though, with such poor attempts at wryness as "I don't mean to be/somewhat unkind/but the bottom of my heart/is in the backseat/of my mind." What we have here is an artist who is exploiting a formula that worked once (his debut album yielded the number 13 hit "No Myth"), but that has tired in the last 10 years. But he does have a famous younger brother.

—Josh Beitel

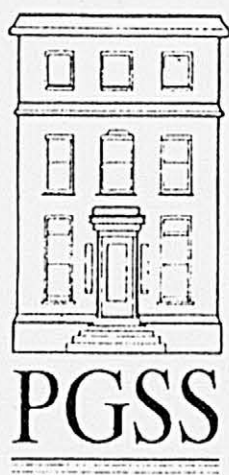


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until someone listens.*  
Paul Carnes

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**Daily Publication Society  
(DPS)**

**Special General Meeting (SGM)**  
Thursday March 9, 2000  
time and place TBA

The Election of the DPS Board of Directors will take place at the SGM. Nominations open February 9 and close March 1.

Nomination kits available at McGill Daily Office room B07 and B03. Candidates will be announced between March 1 and March 9.

For further information  
please contact:

John Godfrey, Chief Returning Officer, DPS, at  
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